

**EVERY MONTH:** K9 Queries – 16 pages of reader questions answered by our experts

PRACTICAL, DEPENDABLE ADVICE FOR ALL DOG-LOVERS

# Dogs

## MONTHLY

DECEMBER 2014



**CHRISTMAS  
GIFT GUIDE**

**In the genes**  
Inherited health conditions

**"He hates other dogs"**  
Practical help for calmer walks

**Little nippers**  
How to prevent puppies biting

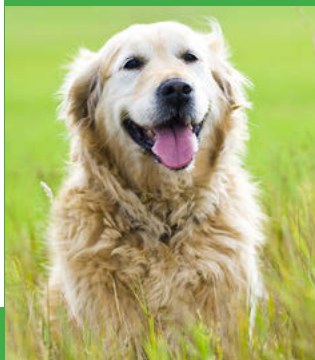
**Aggressive dogs...**  
...and how to reform them

**Cruciate injuries**  
Treatment & recovery

**A dog is for life!**

Think once, think twice, before you commit...

**Golden oldies**



**Ashleigh & Pudsey**



**Dogs & music**



**Chow Chows**





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## EUKANUBA

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# Dogs MONTHLY Hello!

Dogs touch our lives. Everyone who has ever owned or cared for a dog – or any other companion animal, come to that – knows how true that is.

Whether we grow up together (or grow old together...); whether they're with us for many years, or for only a short but sweet time; dogs make a deep, deep impression in our hearts. (And also, it has to be said, sometimes a deep, deep impression on table legs, books and bookshelves, kids' toys, and anything else they can get their little puppy teeth into!).

It's why the question of whether you should get a dog at all – and, if so, what type, when, and where from – is so critical. Turn to page 10 for some expert advice from Sue Gilmore on whether you should; from Pippa Mattinson (p12) on the thorny issue of breeders and breeding (read in conjunction with our feature on p50 on inherited diseases and conditions); and then a heartfelt experience of loss – and hope – from features editor Caroline Davis. No doubt you've been through something similar, so have the tissues at the ready! It'll strike a chord and remind you of how much we love them, how much we owe them – and how they deserve the best lives we can possibly give them.

On behalf of Caroline, Helen, Hannah, ad manager Paula and everyone at ABM Publishing, I'd just like to say a big thank you to every single one of you, and to all our contributors, for your inspiring stories, funny tales, amazing canine knowledge, the photos that made us laugh and the letters that made us cry – and for all your valued support this year. Without you **Dogs Monthly** wouldn't be the special magazine it is.

We wish you all a peaceful, joyful and exceedingly merry Christmas. Who knows what the New Year will bring?



*Gill*

**Gill Shaw**  
Editor



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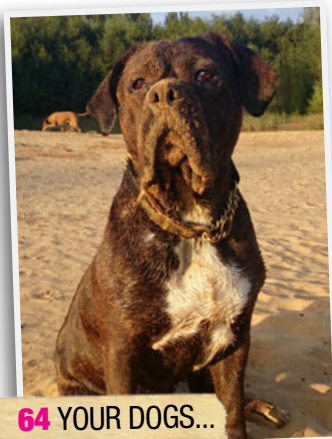
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**Special thanks to:** Gayle Eason, Joy Harris, Luise Janniche.



## SPECIAL OFFER

Promotion Code: PET2

### A UNIQUE AND LASTING PORTRAIT OF YOUR PET

Our pets are part of our families, part of our lives. Like everyone that we love, it's wonderful to celebrate them and have a permanent reminder of them in our homes.

The team of skilled artists at Bronte Porcelain in Worcestershire specialise in the creation of hand-painted ceramic art, following a tradition that has existed in the county for more than 250 years. From portraits to landscapes, each unique work is created entirely by hand on the finest English bone china.

We are therefore delighted to offer you this very special opportunity to commission a unique portrait of your dog, or any other pet, in the form of a hand-painted ceramic plaque. Working from a photograph of your choice, our artists will create a portrait that will truly capture the character and individuality of your pet. It is a painstaking and delicate process, and the end result is a uniquely warm and vivid image, protected by a fine glaze, in permanent colours that will never fade, and personally signed by the artist.



Our specialist animal portraitist, Tony Young, completed his apprenticeship at Royal Worcester, where he was judged 'best animal and bird artist' by the renowned ceramics expert Henry Sandon. He has a particular passion for animal art.

*Tony Young*

The traditional hand skills that are involved in the creation of each portrait mean that the capacity of our studio is strictly limited, so if you wish to take this special opportunity to commission a unique and lasting portrait of your pet, please complete the form below or call us on 01684 310888. We will then contact you to discuss your requirements and agree the details of your commission.

Prices for these bespoke portraits start at just £595 for a 128mm x 183mm plaque, and will depend on factors such as size, additional subject matter, framing and mounting.



I enclose a photo of my pet, I wish to discuss a quotation for a:

Oval Plaque 225mm x 150mm ☐  
 Rectangle Plaque 305mm x 230mm ☐  
 183mm x 128mm ☐

Mounted on Oak Light ☐ Unmounted ☐  
 Dark ☐  
 Framed ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

A 50% deposit will be required on confirmation of order, at which time we will be able to confirm the timescale for the creation of the piece.

**Send to:** Bronte Porcelain, Merebrook Business Park, Hanley Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NP  
 Telephone: 01684 310888 or Email: [enquiries@bronte-porcelain.com](mailto:enquiries@bronte-porcelain.com). **Please quote reference: PET2**



# Dogs NOW

Find out what's happening in the canine world with **Dogs Monthly!**

## KILLED BY KINDNESS

### The drugs don't work...

A DISTURBING study by Direct Line Pet Insurance reveals that in the last year 78 per cent of vets treated pets that had ingested human medication. Worse, 28 per cent had dealt with cases where owners had intentionally given human medication to animals.

In the last year 243 cases of accidental ingestion were reported to the insurer. The majority (76 per cent) involved dogs; the others concerned cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and other small mammals.

More than a quarter of vets told of cases where owners have deliberately given their pet human medication in an attempt to help them. Some owners, for example, believed paracetamol could help conditions like arthritis and lameness.

In one case an owner gave their cat a quarter of paracetamol each day in an attempt to stop its pain. However, paracetamol is toxic to cats and tragically the pet died.

The most common types of medication ingested by pets included:

- Paracetamol, Ibuprofen and Nurofen.
- Specific prescribed human medications (for example, for



Many medicines that are safe for humans can be deadly when ingested by pets.

Pic © JeddajPraj/Shutterstock.com

heart conditions or diabetes).

- Contraceptive pills.
- Anti-depressants.
- Sleeping tablets.

Said vet nurse Madeline Pike: "It is concerning to see so many cases of pets ingesting human medication. Human medication is extremely dangerous to pets. If you suspect that your pet has ingested human medication, it is essential that they see a vet immediately.

"If you are concerned about an illness your pet has, we strongly recommend seeking veterinary advice – do not assume that a smaller dose of human medication will suffice."

If a dog is taken to a vet within two hours of consuming human medication, the vet may be able to induce vomiting with an injection, and then feed the

animal charcoal to soak up toxins. In some cases your pet may also be given an antidote to counteract the effects of the medication. If a pet is not taken to the vet within two hours, animals are usually given fluid treatment to flush out the toxins.

If a pet is already suffering symptoms or complications, such as intestinal ulceration, they will need to be admitted for intensive supportive treatment and monitored closely.

One vet reported a case in which a Husky accidentally consumed a 40-tablet pack of Ibuprofen. Sadly, he was not brought to the clinic for another 16 hours, by which time he was in severe distress and died from liver and kidney damage.

Direct Line is calling on owners to be more vigilant and not expose their animals to

## ADDED BENEFITS

### Joint effects

A LEADING vet is prescribing a long-established cancer treatment to improve the mobility of dogs with joint problems.

Vet Richard Allport has discovered that CV247, a cancer treatment invented in the mid-1990s, has a dramatic effect as an anti-inflammatory.

Said Richard: "CV247 is mostly used as a treatment for cancer in dogs, but I've found it has a clear and positive effect on dogs suffering from joint mobility issues.

"I prescribe CV247 as a treatment for cancer and related issues, and noticed that around 80 per cent of the dogs prescribed it quickly became far brighter and perkier in their demeanour. The treatment contributed towards an anti-inflammatory effect – a bit of an old-fashioned 'tonic' – which often gave dogs more mobile joints, and made them feel better in themselves.

"That 'feel-good' appeared to be a huge contributor to a dog reacting positively to treatment for cancer and related issues. Dogs don't analyse how they feel, but they feel better before they get better."

human medication. It recommends everyone should:

- Assume all human medications are poisonous to pets.
- Seek veterinary advice immediately if you suspect your pet may have consumed any kind of human medication.
- Keep medicines out of reach.
- Read all labels carefully and follow guidelines.
- Have a comprehensive pet insurance policy.

## HOMELESSNESS

### Volunteers needed

COULD YOU help make Christmas happen for homeless people? Homelessness charity Crisis is calling on vets, trainers, kennel staff and people who love dogs to help provide vital services to homeless people at its temporary centres this Christmas.

Crisis at Christmas runs from 23-30 December 2014, with centres set

to open across London, Newcastle and Edinburgh. As well as warmth, companionship, hot meals, healthcare and advice on housing, work and benefits, guests with dogs are encouraged to ensure their pets get a veterinary check-up too.

Volunteers can find out more and register at [crisis.org.uk/volunteer](http://crisis.org.uk/volunteer)



Can you spare some time to help homeless people and their dogs this Christmas?



## LEGISLATION

# New laws on dangerous dogs

CHANGES TO the Dangerous Dogs Act (DDA) 1991 came into force in October. Under the new legislation, dog owners in England and Wales can be fined up to £20,000 if they fail to take steps to prevent their dog attacking a person.

Local authorities will also be able to insist that dogs are muzzled and/or microchipped, and that owners attend training classes with their dog. Some trainers have already expressed misgivings about how this will be implemented, however, and whether it might put them at risk of injury, or even of falling foul of the law themselves.

The new measures are in addition to the changes that came into force earlier this year, which extended prison terms of up to 14 years for a fatal dog attack, five years for an injury, and three years for an attack on an assistance dog. The amended act also now applies to attacks that took place on private property, as well as in public spaces.

In 2013, 6,740 people required hospital treatment for dog attacks, and since 2005, 21 people – 13 of them children – have died following dog attacks.

Said Lord de Mauley, Minister for animal welfare:



New legislation aims to tackle irresponsible owners of aggressive dogs.

"Dog attacks are devastating for victims and their families, which is why we are taking tough action against those who allow them to happen. Police

and local authorities will now have more powers to demand that irresponsible dog owners take steps to prevent attacks before they occur."

## HEALTHY AGEING

# Pets are therapy!

A NEW international report investigates how pet dogs and cats may contribute to physical, mental and societal well-being in an ageing global population. 'Companion Animals and the Health of Older Persons' brings together over 30 years of research literature on the subject, which it's hoped can be used to inform policy, practice and future research into healthy ageing.

Said Dr Jane Barratt of the International Federation on Ageing: "Many studies have broadly discussed how pets contribute to health by reducing anxiety, loneliness and depression, but have not been published in a single resource [until now]."

Statistics from Age UK show there are 11 million people aged

65 or over in the UK. Nearly half of over-65s say that pets or television are their main form of companionship, while 12 per cent say pets are their main form of company.

Dogs like Pets As Therapy (PAT) visitor Bodie can really make a difference to older people's lives. When the Jack Russell Terrier arrives to greet care home residents at Merton Place Nursing Home in Conwy, Wales, their faces light up. He also regularly visits Ty Gobaith Children's Hospice where the children play with him and take him for a walk, and Llandrillo College where



Pic © Support Dogs

Alfie has given Judith her confidence back.

Josey Flynn looks forward to visits from PAT dog Bodie.



Pic © Pets As Therapy

he helps students with learning difficulties.

Alfie is another canine superstar. Trained by Support Dogs he helps owner Judith who has the progressive neurological condition cerebellar ataxia.

Saus Judith: "Alfie is so much more than the tasks he does for me; he gives me confidence to go anywhere I want and emotional support. I've even started volunteering three days a week at a charity for people with disabilities, and run a course at Macmillan Cancer Care. There are times when people there become upset and, without being told, Alfie runs straight over to give them a cuddle and make them feel better."

"Alfie has given me back my independence. I can go anywhere on my own and know he'll look after me. Whatever happens he will be with me".

Said Michael Devoy, chief medical officer at Bayer Health Care, which sponsored the report: "The interaction between humans and animals is powerful. Animals can educate, motivate, and enhance the quality of life for people around the world. We are excited that this research has the ability to reach human healthcare practitioners, veterinarians, doctors, nurses, gerontologists, and social workers."

## VIDEO

# Fit for action



WITH BOTH human and canine obesity at an all-time high, the Kennel Club (KC) has launched an online video of the top five exercises for dogs and their owners.

The exercises were developed as part of the KC's Get Fit With Fido campaign and were devised by the creators of Wag & Tone, an exercise programme for dogs and their owners. They're designed for people of all ages and abilities as a brief introduction to improving fitness levels for both dog and owner.

The campaign encourages dogs and their owners to get fit together to improve both health and fitness and rewards those who lose most weight through the Get Fit With Fido Challenge.

You can find a link to the video at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/get-fit-with-fido/weight-loss-tools](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/get-fit-with-fido/weight-loss-tools)



# When love breaks down...

EVERY WEEK, an average of four pets are taken in by Blue Cross rehoming centres following relationship breakdowns. Couples splitting up sometimes have agreements in place to protect their assets, but rows about the ownership, 'custody' or future well-being of pets are commonplace.

To help address the growing problem, the charity has launched a 'Pet Nup' – the pet equivalent of a pre-nuptial agreement, but with pet welfare at its heart. The document – which crucially must be signed by both parties and witnessed in order to be legally binding – declares ownership, responsibilities and rights in the event of a relationship breakdown.

Research carried out by Blue Cross revealed that more than one in four divorced couples in the UK argued over the ownership of their pets when they split up. Women are most likely to keep the pet when a relationship breaks down, and almost two thirds of respondents say arguing over pets added to the emotional turmoil of their divorce.

The Pet Nup, developed by specialist lawyers, sets out the right of ownership in the event of a divorce or relationship breakdown and, importantly, also covers ongoing care.

Also available is a simple Deed of Agreement document that states who will take ownership in the event of a

divorce or break-up.

Vanessa Lloyd Platt, divorce lawyer at Lloyd Platt & Company, which developed the Pet Nup, said: "Pets are part of the family so in the event of divorce who gets to look after the pet (as with children) is sadly all too often the grounds for much dispute. Just as with the house, the car, and the gadgets, it makes sense to agree who gets ownership of the dog, horse, or chinchilla in the event of a relationship breakdown."

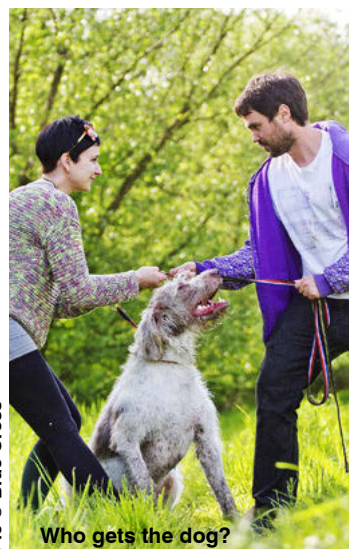
In cases where a couple can't decide who should keep the pet, 15 per cent give them to a friend, 12 per cent to a family member, and six per cent to rescue charities like Blue Cross.

Said Alyson Jones, Blue Cross rehoming manager: "We deal with some very upsetting situations when pets are brought to us following relationship splits. It really is devastating for everyone involved – including the pet. One partner will sometimes bring a pet to us for rehoming without the other's knowledge. "Our pets are not just material goods; they are at the heart of our lives, so it makes sense to agree up front who will keep your pet, so they don't get dragged through the courts or end up in rehoming centres."

Blue Cross research found that the top five areas of disagreement concerned the number of walks per day (41 per cent), frequency of grooming (34 per cent), vet check-ups (25 per cent), how long pets should be left alone (24 per cent), and holidays (17 per cent).

Added Vanessa Lloyd Platt: "The courts in England and Wales do not like deciding how people should divide ownership of their pets, but where they do, evidence of who bought the pet, or a document outlining who will get what and who will pay for what, will be very strong evidence."

To download a free copy of the Pet Nup or Deed of Agreement visit [www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-nup](http://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-nup)



Who gets the dog?

Pic © Blue Cross



Go Gracie go!

## WINNING WAYS

# Top dogs, top owners!

● Two-year-old Border Terrier Gracie has been voted 'Britain's Champion Pet' by visitors to Butcher's Pet Care's Facebook page. The competition had categories for most energetic, happiest, naughtiest, friendliest and most adventurous pets.

Gracie, owned by Aleksandra Bekker from Northampton, won the 'Most Adventurous Pet' category as well the overall title. Said Aleksandra: "We're really proud of Gracie! We'll use the prize vouchers to buy her a treat and the rest have been donated to Border Terrier Welfare UK."

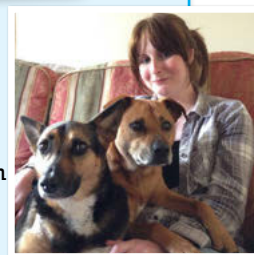
● Christie Hanson from Huddersfield has been crowned 'The UK's Most Dedicated Pet Owner' in a competition run by Frontline Spot On.

Christie adopted two rescue dogs – crossbreeds six-year-old Roxie and

seven-year-old Copper – but not long afterwards Roxie was diagnosed with lymphoma.

Every week Christie and Roxie made a 150-mile round trip for specialist treatment, while Copper waited patiently at home for her best friend to return. Sadly, in September Roxie lost her battle. Copper became quite depressed but Christie set up doggy play dates to help her start to interact with other dogs again.

Said Christie: "I'm thrilled to have won. Roxie was a real fighter and I'm so proud of Copper's devotedness to her best friend. I've learnt to cherish every moment with my dogs and will ensure Copper is doted on."



Caring Christie, with Roxie (left) and Copper.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Making complaints

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has improved the way in which it investigates concerns raised by owners about the professional conduct of veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses. The new measures aim to streamline and speed up the process, and improve communication, making it less stressful for all.

For more information visit [www.rcvs.org.uk/concerns](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/concerns)

### Hotel hound

Best Western GB has launched a useful little guide to its dog-friendly hotels in Britain. Written by our very own 'Doggy DIY' crafter Rachael D'Cruze-Sharpe (and her dog Poppy!) it reviews the group's hotels, rooms and food, as well as suggesting local walks and dog-friendly places to have a drink.

Download the guide at

[www.bestwestern.co.uk/hotels/petfriendlyhotels.aspx](http://www.bestwestern.co.uk/hotels/petfriendlyhotels.aspx)

### Dogs go glamping!

Lancombe Country Cottages and Lodges in Dorset ([www.lancombe.co.uk](http://www.lancombe.co.uk)) has something to suit all tastes, from dog-friendly properties to gypsy caravans and bell-tents for a 'glamping' holiday with a difference. Before booking any dog-friendly getaway, Lancombe advises:

- Always check the accommodation welcomes dogs, and provides the necessary facilities, including exercise space.
- Take along your dog's favourite blanket and toys, plus spare collars and leads.
- Ensure microchip and ID tag details are up to date.
- Take plenty of water and snacks for the journey, and stop regularly for breaks.
- On holiday, follow your dog's routine where possible, so he feels safe and happy.



# KONG® Anxiety-Reducing Shirt

From the makers of the iconic KONG Classic - the original anxiety reducing toy

**NEW  
PRODUCT  
LAUNCH**

The NEW KONG Anxiety-Reducing Shirt offers a simple and very effective way of calming most anxious dogs. It's suitable for indoor and outdoor use and is perfect for most anxiety inducing situations, such as visits to the Vet, car rides, thunderstorms, fireworks and separation.

Designed for dogs of all breeds and ages, the KONG Anxiety-Reducing Shirt features:

- User friendly step-in design
- Easily adjustable to prevent skin irritation, or adding excess bulk, when worn
- Breathable material for year-round use. Machine washable
- Available in 9 sizes to fit most breeds
- Snuggly fitting, full torso wrap-around design applies calming pressure
- The added benefits of a sachet of calming dried Lavender
- Reflective trim to improve visibility and safety during times of low light

The relaxing effects of the Anxiety-Reducing Shirt can be enhanced by giving your dog a stuffed KONG, which will occupy and help distract them, when they are feeling anxious.

Widely available from pet shops and veterinary practices.



**VETERINARIAN  
APPROVED**



A simple and effective way to calm anxious dogs

## Dogs & people

If you are thinking about buying a puppy for yourself, or someone else, then think at least twice and do your homework first – as **Sue Gilmore** advises...

**W**ho can resist the appeal of a fluffy puppy or the sad eyes of a dog waiting for a new mum or dad to take him home from a rescue centre?

Does refusing the pleas of a child for a puppy make a parent hard-hearted, or is it a reasoned decision taken in the best interests of the family? Who will be responsible for the

dog's care and well-being?

Children are usually very eager initially, but when the novelty wears off, will mum or dad have time to train and socialise the dog?

### LIFE-CHANGING DECISION

Buying a puppy or taking in a pre-loved older dog is a huge commitment. It can alter the dynamics of a family and

Pet dogs depend on people, so be sure you can fulfil all your responsibilities to one before committing to ownership.



# A dog is for life!



change lives. Perhaps the commitment is even greater for a person living alone, or for the young couple who work full-time but who desperately want the company of a dog to take for walks, to play with and to complete the family.

Most people think long and hard before starting the search for a dog, which is as it should be. Dogs have needs just as we have, but they rely on us to fulfil them. They can't go to the supermarket and select their food, they can't take themselves out for a walk, nor can they tell us in plain English when they don't feel so good.

Dogs generally communicate by action. For example, if they don't like the food they're given they leave it until they get so hungry that they might have to eat it to survive. They might whimper to be let out to relieve themselves or even eat their own faeces to avoid being told off for fouling the carpet.

It's our responsibility to provide for them and to treat them with respect. We are not only responsible for our dogs; we are responsible to them.

## COST OF OWNERSHIP

Perhaps the most important consideration in these straitened times is financial. How much does a dog cost to buy and keep? Here are some points worth considering:

### Initial outlay

The cost of buying a puppy varies enormously. Some are given away to 'good homes', whereas rare pedigree breeds can cost thousands of pounds. Even dogs of the same breed can vary by substantial sums.

There are tens of thousands of dogs in rescue centres in need of a home and the comparable cost of these is relatively low, even for puppies. The key question that needs to be answered is, what breed or type would best suit you and your family?

### Time & suitability

A small dog such as a Chihuahua or Miniature Poodle can be just as demanding as a large breed, such as a Labrador or Rottweiler in some ways, but the dogs' needs do vary greatly.

Small breeds eat less food, generally live longer and need less exercise – taking them out for lengthy walks for hours on end is neither necessary nor good for their well-being. That's not to say they don't need exercise, they certainly do – but we must bear in mind that they have short legs!

In comparison, a medium- or large-breed dog needs a decent amount of daily exercise and would be suitable for an owner who likes the outdoor life, long walks, energetic games or more demanding pursuits.

However, some large breeds, such as Bullmastiffs, need less exercise due to their physiology, while working dogs are better suited to experienced owners who understand the needs of that particular breed.

## OWNERSHIP ESSENTIALS

So, what do dogs need to be happy, responsive and valuable members of the family?

### Food

A regular, adequate supply of good quality food is necessary to provide all the nutrients essential to sustain life, energy enough to grow, exercise and maintain good health.

The choice of food products is massive, so how do you choose what to give your pet? Do you feed dry food from a packet, which is convenient, or spend a few minutes giving a varied diet ranging from tinned, frozen or raw food?

Years ago, dogs were fed scraps of meat and vegetables from the dinner table and seemed to thrive on it, but table scraps nowadays could be junk food or processed foods, which are detrimental to the health of our dogs, let alone us.

The Internet is a great source of information on dog food, what it contains, the cost and benefits, but don't be fooled by marketing hype – read the labels and check what ingredients and additives are in the product!

Remember that good-quality food saves on vet bills. Buying cheap food could be costly in the long run, plus you'll have more poo to clean up and dispose of.

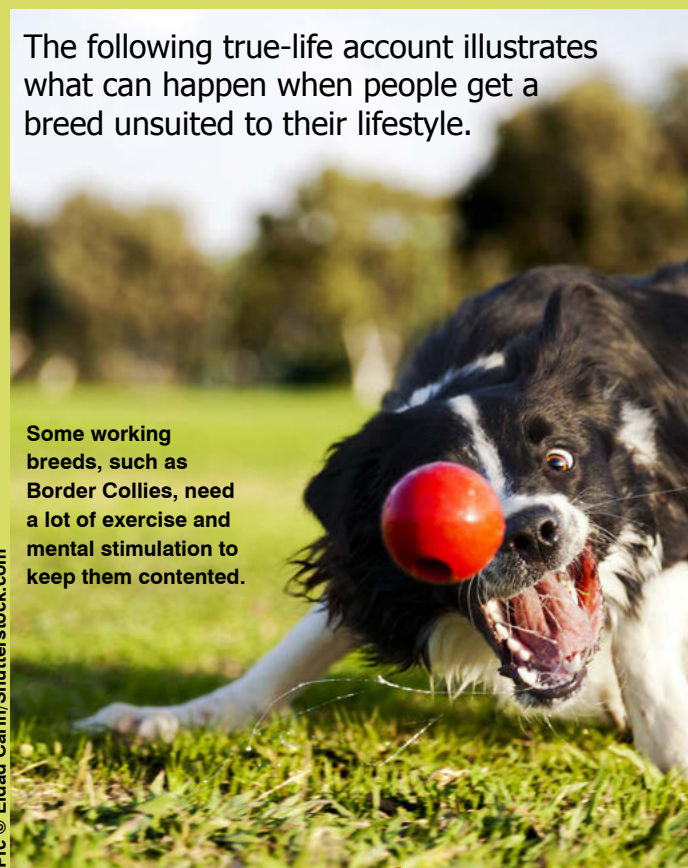
## Case study

### Avoid a mismatch

The following true-life account illustrates what can happen when people get a breed unsuited to their lifestyle.

Some working breeds, such as Border Collies, need a lot of exercise and mental stimulation to keep them contented.

Pic © Eldad Carin/Shutterstock.com



All dogs, no matter what breed, need regular mental stimulation. For example, in my experience, many Border Collies suited to working for hours on end find living in domestic circumstances does not meet their needs at all.

Take Croz, a two-year-old male Border Collie from working stock, who went to live with Elise, a lovely lady who had always wanted a Collie. When she retired she decided it was 'now or never' to get the dog of her dreams. She bought Croz as a puppy, took him to training classes for a few months and he settled in well.

It was not until Croz was seven months old that he started to become a handful – chewing the furniture, destroying shoes, digging up the lawn and eating the plants that Elise took such pride in.

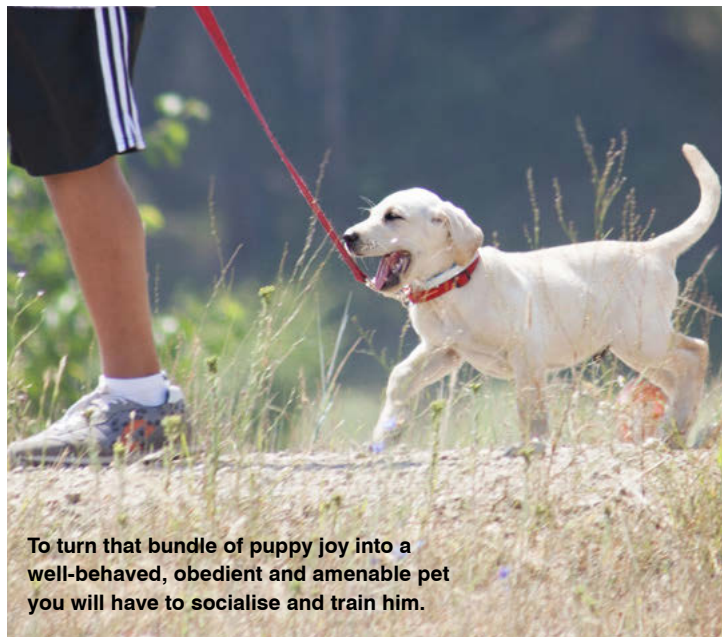
Things went from bad to worse when Croz bit Elise for what seemed to be no good reason. He had always

**Elise was distraught; the dog of her dreams had turned into a monster.**

jumped up and nipped since he was a puppy, but at the age of two he had become too much for Elise to cope with and he was sent for rehoming.

Elise was distraught; the dog of her dreams had turned into a 'monster'. Despite her taking him for two walks a day, giving him the best food she could afford and loving him to bits, Croz was unfulfilled. His needs were more than Elise could provide.

The story has, however, a happy ending. Croz is now competing in sheep dog trials with some success and his new owner, a sheep farmer, couldn't be happier with his new dog.



Pic © Annette Shaff/Shutterstock.com

To turn that bundle of puppy joy into a well-behaved, obedient and amenable pet you will have to socialise and train him.

### Training

Training and socialising a dog take time and commitment, but both are essential and must be ongoing throughout a dog's life in order for him to be contented and responsive.

Dogs need leadership and guidance, positive correction when necessary and, last on the list, affection. Smothering a dog with love and cuddles will not make him a happy, responsive dog – often quite the opposite.

### Vets' bills

Other financial considerations include the cost of pet insurance to cover the health problems that many dogs can suffer at any age of their lives. The cost of veterinary treatment is high (there's no pet NHS!), so expect treatment to run into hundreds of pounds.

There are many different levels of cover offered by the various insurance companies, so it's worthwhile comparing what's available and what best suits your budget.

### Care cover

Most people enjoy an annual holiday, often abroad, so consider the cost of kennels for the duration of any planned travel. Small dogs generally cost less to kennel than larger breeds but, again, prices vary.

Going out for the day can also be difficult for single people. Leaving a dog home alone all day is to be avoided, so employing the services of a reliable dog walker/sitter/

doggy day care facility is an option if friends or neighbours are unable to help. See the October issue of **Dogs Monthly** for tips on finding a carer (see p74 to order a back copy).

### Coat care

Some breeds also need regular professional grooming, in addition to the daily brushing that we can do as owners, so consideration as to the cost of monthly trips to the groomer should be factored into your budget.

### IS IT WORTH IT?

Owning a dog can at times be frustrating, but in my experience the joy that they bring far outweighs the time, money and energy required to keep them.

Dog ownership is a big commitment, but in most cases extremely rewarding and fulfilling and when we go home after a bad day at the office, look who's waiting for us, wagging his tail and giving us the warmest of welcomes. ●

### About the author



**Sue Gilmore** MA BSc (Hons) is the political adviser to the Pet Education, Training and Behaviour

Council (PETbc), and is a professional dog trainer, behaviourist and dog photographer. She runs the Essex Dog Academy and Gilmores Dog Photography.

## Expert's view

# Pedigree problems

**Pippa Mattinson** advises on how adequate research is necessary to avoid being 'sold a pup'.

**I**t is frustrating, but people just seem to believe that they don't need to do any research if they are buying a pedigree dog. They think that the pedigree form is proof of quality. In fact, the log book on a second-hand car is more revealing, and you wouldn't buy one of those without checking the MOT certificate, would you?

### GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS TO PEOPLE

I was chatting to an acquaintance recently when they mentioned that they were collecting their new puppy in a few days' time. This was a well-educated, intelligent person with a fully functioning computer in their living room.

In the course of the conversation it came out that they had not asked the breeder about health certificates, nor had they any idea that they should have done so. This information was available to them at the flick of a computer search button, yet they had made no attempt to find it. Not because they are lazy, but because they did not know there were any grounds for concern.

It occurred to me that all the information in the world, information of the kind available on The Labrador Site ([www.thelabradorite.com](http://www.thelabradorite.com)), for example, is no use to a person that has no idea they have need of it.

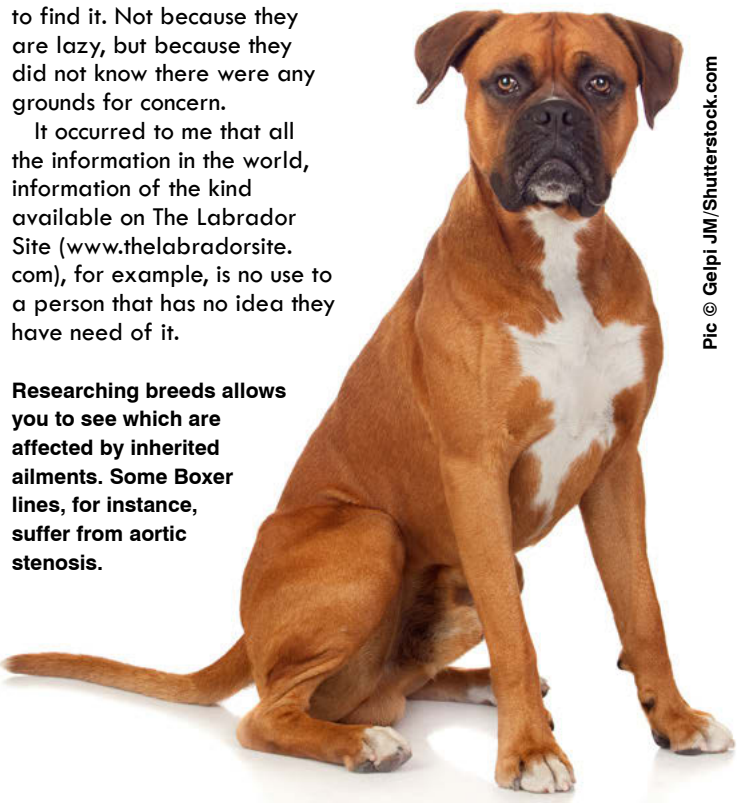
**Researching breeds allows you to see which are affected by inherited ailments. Some Boxer lines, for instance, suffer from aortic stenosis.**

So how do we get around the fact that there are still people out there think choosing the right puppy is no different from choosing the right fridge?

In fact, I suspect that most people would search the Internet for reviews if replacing the fridge was on the agenda. So why do they not do their research before bringing a dog into their hearts and homes?

There is a real problem here, though. Information of the kind I conveyed to my acquaintance is often not received well. Once people have made up their mind to do something, they are not necessarily grateful to be warned of a potential problem. Such advice may even be viewed as scaremongering. And this is a great shame, because there is a very real issue out there – and it is not being effectively addressed.

Most weeks I hear from people who live with a pedigree dog that has a largely avoidable health problem such as hip dysplasia (HD), elbow problems, and so



Pic © Gelpi JM/Shutterstock.com



on. If you visit any large dog forum you will find literally dozens of threads from people who have bought puppies with no health checks and ended up with a dog that has HD, or some other common inherited disease [see p50].

Not only can these conditions empty your wallet in a heartbeat, they are often devastating for the families and cause pain and suffering for the dog.

The dog my acquaintance was intending to buy was from a breed that is prone to HD and also suffers from aortic stenosis, which is a heart condition that can lead to exercise intolerance, fainting and, in severe cases, death. Screening has reduced the incidence of the disease, and every bitch and dog from susceptible breeds should be tested before breeding.

## EDUCATION IS KEY

For some time I have felt that it was the buyer's job to do their research before obtaining a puppy, and that there is only so much that the 'authorities' should be expected to do in order to protect people from themselves.

I felt that if the information was out there and easy to find and understand, people would become better educated as to how they should go about finding a puppy that would have a good chance of a long and healthy life.

Providing this kind of information was one of my aims when I set up The Labrador Site. Right now, though, I am not so sure that relying on dog enthusiasts like me to provide information to the puppy-buying public is sufficient.

Part of the problem seems to be that a Kennel Club (KC) pedigree is regarded as an endorsement of the puppy by this generally respected organisation. My acquaintance knew that the dog he intended to buy had a pedigree because he had seen the papers. I believe that the reason he and his family did not do any further research was because, in their minds, this pedigree was proof of a quality dog.

While I am sure that there is no intent to deceive or mislead people, there is no getting away from the fact that the KC issues pedigrees and the public reads far more into them than is there.

A pedigree is a statement of ancestry. It's a family tree and nothing more. It tells you that the mother and father of your dog both belong to the same closed register of dogs of that breed.

Yet clearly the general public think it means more. They believe that it is a stamp of quality. It makes them feel safe and instils confidence in their choice of dog.

The question is, does the KC have a responsibility to improve this situation?

Should the KC be making it clear on the pedigree that a pedigree is not a guarantee of any kind of health? Should the KC even be registering puppies from breeding stock that have not been given even the most basic health tests? Is it negligent of them to do so?

## CONFUSING INFORMATION

On the Kennel Club's website [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/getting-a-dog-or-puppy] there is a page entitled 'Finding the right breeder' and there is plenty of useful information there for the would-be pedigree puppy buyer.

I do feel that the following, though, is a little confusing. It is part of a list of 'information to ask the breeder for': A *pedigree detailing your dog's ancestry – this could either be hand-written or a printed pedigree from either the breeder or an official one from the Kennel Club*. And under this: *Copies of any additional health certificates for the sire and dam*. Additional? Additional to what?

To me the use of the word 'additional' (the Kennel Club's emphasis, not mine) rather implies that the pedigree itself is a health certificate of some kind.

Under the heading 'What to expect from a breeder' (above on that same page) I would have expected the first priority

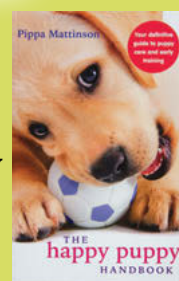


Never buy pups if you cannot see the mother with them. Be certain that the bitch is in fact their mother – check her teats to ensure she's producing milk.

## Puppy care

Pippa Mattinson, dog trainer and founder of The Gundog Trust, tells you everything you need to know about caring for and training your new puppy in *The Happy Puppy Handbook*.

Beautifully illustrated, this book is a necessary and useful addition to a puppy parent's bookcase. It is, as it says on the cover, a 'definitive guide to puppy care and early training'. ● £11.99. Published by Ebury Press. ISBN: 9 780 09195 726 1.



would be that the breeder will have carried out the relevant health checks on the parents of the puppy, and that the results will be acceptably good, but this is not mentioned until the 'Information to ask for' section that I have quoted.

I don't have all the answers to the questions I have raised in this article, but if I know one person who has been misled by a piece of paper with 'Pedigree' written on it, then there must be plenty of others like him.

I should probably point out the KC do run an Assured Breeder Scheme, under which members undertake to carry out the necessary health checks for their breed. However, if the average man or woman in the street is not even aware that there are problems to look out for, they are hardly going to search for a breeder that undertakes to try to avoid those problems.

So, the issue must surely lie

with the pedigree itself and the trust that people are placing in this document.

What do you think? Should the KC make puppy registration dependent on adequate health checks? Does the information they provide need revising? Should a pedigree state clearly 'This is not a certificate of health'? Or should people be left to make their own mistakes and suffer the consequences? ●

## About the author



**Pippa Mattinson** is an author, zoologist and gundog enthusiast. She is a keen supporter of modern, science-based dog training methods and is passionate about helping people to enjoy their dogs. See a review of her book, *Total Recall*, on p67 and find out more about her training methods and books at [pippamattinson.com](http://pippamattinson.com)



Buyer's view

## Hounding out bad breeders

So the decision is made, and you are going to get a dog. But where do you start? **Caroline Davis** advises from her own experience.

**M**y dog died last summer. Across my knee while I told him what a good boy he was.

Like everything else Wolfie did, he was polite and absolutely no trouble and he engineered the perfect death as the intelligent, loyal and always-loving-without-reproach German



Pic © Rita Kochmarjova/Shutterstock.com

All puppies are cute and hard to resist, but if the breeder has not carefully bred from health-checked and screened stock then it's a gamble whether or not they will be healthy.

Shepherd Dog (GSD) he was.

Considerate to the last, he simply looked at me when I got home from work one Monday and said 'Mum, I don't feel at all well'; gums white (cue frantic call to vet!). Then he laid himself across my knee as I stroked him and told him how much I loved him.

Vet arrived, helped make

him comfortable and comforted me. Calm and kind, he ushered me and my partner out of the way so he could get to the VIP (very important patient, whom he'd looked after from cradle, and now it seemed, to grave), checked him over and said simply: "It's not good; catastrophic organ failure I'm afraid." Despite his best

efforts, my brave and dignified old dog went peacefully to Rainbow Bridge half an hour later.

### "SUCH A GOOD BOY"

Wolfie was such a good boy, for all of the 10 years I was privileged to have him. I had two other GSDs – Prince and Hal – before him, both



Wolfie in his twilight years – still game for any mischief going.

Pic © Malt Ingham





Wolfie, seen here in his younger days, was the star of many a Dogs Monthly photoshoot.

**Sadly, the number of 'backyard breeders' churning out litters of £450 pups to make money rather than improve the breed, and not caring where the pups end up, is ever-increasing.'**

'backyard breeders' churning out litters of £450 pups to make money rather than improve the breed, and not caring where the pups end up, is ever-increasing rather than reducing. Those poor dogs. It's an absolute scandal.

The trouble is, people will buy them because they are cheaper than responsibly bred pups from health-checked parents – and so it encourages even more people to breed even more unhealthy puppies, and the cycle continues.

And so many of these pups seem to end up back on Epupz, Gumtree and Pets4Homes (and various other websites I came across) six months down the line when the appeal of people's 'cute and cheap puppy' impulse buy wears off and they can't cope with a big and bouncy untrained adolescent dog. It's so depressing...

### END IN SIGHT?

The upshot is that I have now found excellent breeders with the type of dogs I'm after. And I am hopefully awaiting a puppy from a litter yet to be confirmed. The price will be a lot steeper than the £200 I parted with 10 years ago, but this time judgement will play a huge part in my choice.

If I'm lucky, he or she will be as grand a four-legged friend as my Wolfie was. I'll keep you posted! ●

wonderful in their own way, but Wolfie was just the best.

From the moment I saw him at six weeks old, I could hardly wait to collect him at eight weeks. He wobbled over to me in that fat, happy puppy way, smiling and furiously wagging his tail; I picked him up, sat him on my knee and his little tail just wagged and wagged... he chose me.

And that tail never stopped wagging when I got him home. It wagged always, albeit a bit more sedately as he got older and then just old. Even as he died, Wolfie's tail was still trying to wag. He was a very much loved, happy and fulfilled dog, always, and he knew that.

Of course my grief was intense. Never have another dog... can't go through that again, ever. But then, as time went on, the house was somehow soulless and empty.

No irritating shed-load of hair to vac up every day; no 'I'm here!' slobbery kisses; no slurpy-groomy licking when watching TV; no stink of damp dog after a rainy walk; no hoovering up of cat food before the moggies could eat it; no dragging myself out for a walk on a freezing, lagging-

it-down night after work when I didn't feel like it but Wolfie did and there was absolutely no refusal; no gentle touch of wet nose in my hand to say 'Hi, Mum, love you, I'm here...'; just, no Wolfie...

No dog, no home. It was grim.

### THE SEARCH

As the weeks went by, I began to feel the loss of Wolfie so very keenly – in more ways than one. Not least when we had a visit one night from diesel thieves. My cats – not even Malham, my handsome but rather unhinged feral moggy – are no deterrent to burglars. I needed another big dog! So, it should not be too difficult to get another GSD, right? Wrong!

When I bought Wolfie a decade ago, he cost the princely sum of £200 and came without a pedigree or any health checks. I was extremely lucky that he was healthy through his life.

However, knowing what I know now about the health problems of many pedigree dogs – and GSDs being one of the worst afflicted by hereditary ailments – I decided that I was going to be thorough

in checking that any prospective pups were bred properly and that their parents had been health-tested.

On top of that requirement, I also wanted a GSD with a back you can balance a cup of tea on – not one of those slope-backed types that seem to be so popular in the show ring.

So the hunt was on and, to cut a long story short, several months on with the search I have still not found my next canine companion. In doing research into the breed, and into lines and types, I have got a real task on my hands. All I want is a healthy, level-backed dog for pet purposes – and that, it seems, is as rare as rocking horse droppings.

It's been extremely hard walking away from cute litters of pups, after discovering the conditions they were bred and kept in were less than ideal. Or that they had not been home-socialised properly – just stuck in a pen in the garden. Or that health checks were not carried out before breeding. Or that the pedigrees of the parents were not forthcoming to check the lines and for inbreeding... the 'steer clear' list is endless.

Sadly, the number of

### About the author



**Caroline Davis** is **Dogs Monthly's** features/sub-editor and lives in Lincolnshire with a menagerie of pets including a Papillon, nine cats and a disabled woodpigeon called, originally, Woody.



Playtime in the park.

# Our True life tale diamond from Dubai

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? When black Labrador Chester moved in, **Christina White** found he took everything in his stride.

**A** year ago my brother's dog came to live with us in London. Kevin's marriage had broken down and there was no one at home to look after his beautiful black Labrador. Although I work full time, my mother lives nearby and between us we decided we would care for Chester. He would become the family dog and at least that way Kevin could still see him when he was over from Dubai. My sons agreed to help with the dog walking and Grandma was game for dog-sitting during the day.

Chester's arrival was dramatic. He barked furiously, desperate to get out of the dog crate after the long flight. He nearly knocked my elderly mother over as she clung tenaciously to his lead; evidently dog-walking

was not going to be one of Grandma's tasks.

I came to collect Chester after work. I was worried he would miss my brother too much – they were such soulmates – or that he might think it was a holiday, not for keeps. He licked my hands and looked at me with his big dark eyes. I'd always loved him, now he broke my heart.

We knew Chester – albeit fleetingly – from holidays abroad, but he was younger then; a naughty puppy whose favourite trick was running away. He was once found swimming in the neighbours' pool, hidden under the tarpaulin. I had grown up with a black Lab – a gentle coal-black bitch, a streak of dark in old family photographs. Cindy was only eight when she got

cancer and was put to sleep. I had now taken possession of a much older Labrador – Chester was nearly 11.

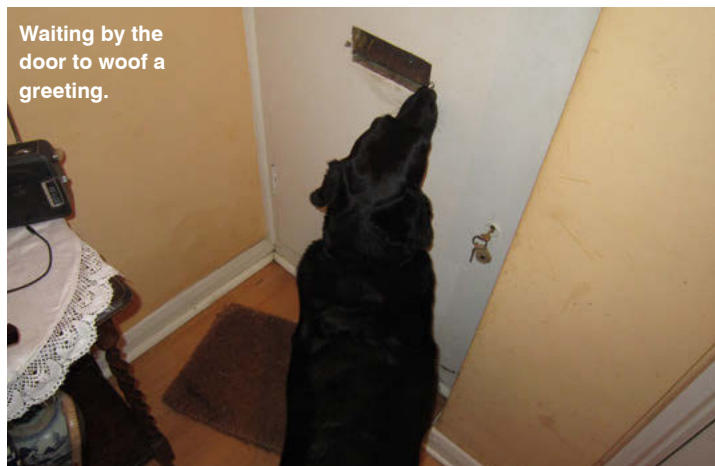
## WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Older dogs languish in the nation's rescue centres. One

glimpse of a grey muzzle and many people look the other way fearing rising vets' bills and the inevitable sorrow of an early parting. Sceptics say 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks'. We had no idea what to expect.

Nearly a year on, and Chester has proved the sceptics wrong and taken everything in his stride. At first he was hopeless at walking on the lead

Waiting by the door to woof a greeting.





– this was a dog used to sand dunes not zebra crossings – and on his first bus ride he refused to sit down, but gradually he has learned the etiquette of city living.

Yes, he's old, but it's Chester who takes me for a walk every morning – hurtling out of the house with abandoned delight. We head for a disused railway track that meanders through our local area, and meet fellow dog walkers.

Initially, Chester seemed shy of other dogs. As the weeks passed we watched his confidence grow and now he greets his peers with a deep Bryn Terfel 'woof'. He is known locally for his ebullient nature and his 'helicopter' tail, which circles as he runs. I am servant, not master in this relationship. As soon as the sun is up, so am I. In the nearby park I often greet the dawn watching Chester on yet another fruitless, squirrel-chasing quest.

After his walk I take him to my mother's and then head in to work. Pensioner dog-sitting works on so many levels and Grandma and Chester are marvellous company for each other. He snoozes and potters, sneaks the odd Rich Tea biscuit, and patrols my mother's garden. By late afternoon, sufficiently refreshed, he stands guard by the front door, gulping down the air by the letter box, waiting for my eldest son who collects him after school.

## CHANGING SEASONS

Walk an elderly dog and strangers chat to you and exchange dog stories. I took him out recently and as he sniffed and sauntered I picked blackberries. Chester has given us time to stop and watch the sky; to observe the changing seasons. As a young dog he would head for the hills, a speck on the horizon, but now he walks with you, companionably bumbling along. I talk to him endlessly.

This summer we took him on holiday to West Wittering. We bought him an eiderdown at a charity shop there and bones at the butcher's. He loved the sea and the beach – a true water dog as he bounded in and out of the coming tide. He overdid

it of course, refusing to get out of the water, and the following day he was stiff and ached a little. 'He's like me, he's old,' says my mother.

Following a bout of arthritis in the winter he's now on daily medication; half a tablet which he invariably spits out knowing it will then be hidden in a slice of salami. We have to pace him. At first I would take him across Hampstead Heath for hours but age has wearied him a little and our forays to the Heath are shorter. Chester is no longer a marathon runner: 'Exercise little and often,' advises the vet. 'Half an hour at a time is just fine.'

## YOUNG AT HEART

At heart he's still a puppy; an inveterate licker of plates and forager of food. He loves to find the dishwasher open. He is scared of storms and barks at thunder. Postmen approach cautiously – every knock on the door is greeted with a deep, territorial 'woof'.

He likes looking out of the window – our London street has cats, squirrels and urban foxes, though the recycling lorry is a particular Chester favourite. Come European Election night he barked whenever Nigel Farage appeared on screen. In the World Cup Final he supported Germany. He dreams on the sofa, chasing squirrels.

He's the last member of the household I speak to at night as I kiss his velvet ears and he's the first member of the household I greet in the morning. We couldn't, in truth, have handled a puppy at this stage in our lives. Chester has just slotted in; he has adapted to us and we to him.

The old adage is wrong; you can teach an old dog new tricks. Our black dog of Araby has become a city boy. ●

## About the author



**Christina White** lives in north London with her two teenage boys and works at Westminster Cathedral. She

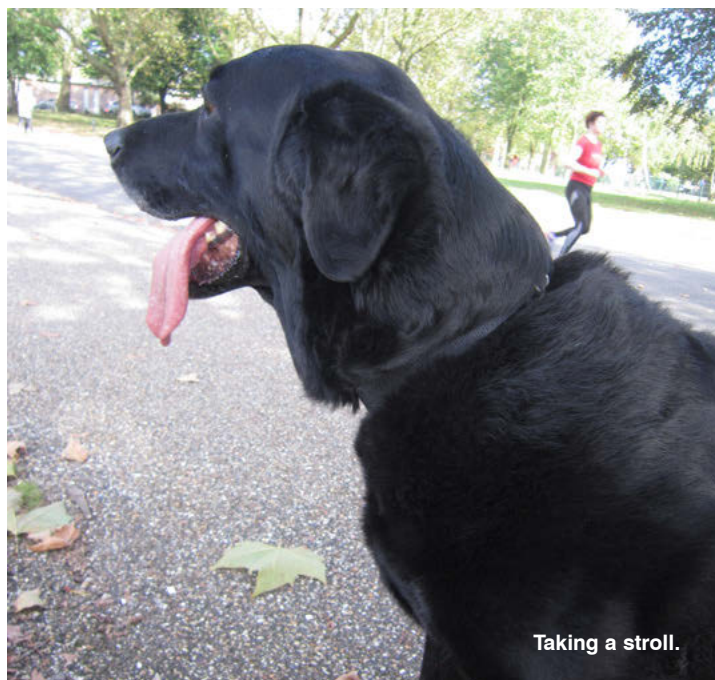
enjoys dog walking, swimming in the sea, reading and opera.



Begging Grandma for a bite of her Rich Tea.



Watching out for the recycling lorry.




Taking a stroll.



When trainer **James Reavil** was called in to help curb Labrador Retriever Jonty's unruly, aggressive behaviour, just one session proved to be a huge turning point...

# A reformed





'Me? Badly behaved?!' Jonty is now a different dog after James stepped in and helped to train him out of his antisocial ways.

**E**very now and then I get to work with a dog who, from the moment I ask him to change his behaviour, just 'gets it', leading to a completely reformed character.

One such dog is Jonty, a yellow Labrador Retriever who was just over four when I first went to see him. The main reason why his owners asked me for help was that Jonty displayed aggression towards people, especially in the home, and barked at people too, both in the home and outside.

He was also nervous around other dogs due to a confrontation with a Border Collie when he was seven months old.

Jonty's nervousness was worsened when an ill member of the family came to live with his owners. He became protective of this particular family member when carers visited and this made his general behaviour worse.

Jonty wasn't able to enjoy time off-lead on walks because of his aggression and taking him out with the family was a

hassle. Jonty's family live and breathe cricket, but he became the devil dog when he went with them to watch a game. In short, there were a fair few issues to address.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When I first arrived, Jonty spent 10 minutes displaying aggression towards me. He clearly wasn't comfortable with new people in the house, even when they weren't even looking at him. He barked continually, lunging and backing away and bouncing on his front legs.

Being a Labrador, a breed with a reputation for enjoying food, we looked at using treats to build trust. This didn't work, which wasn't a surprise as Jonty was highly excited and had lots of adrenaline coursing through his body. Instead, I tried using a piece of equipment I find subtle yet highly effective – training discs (which should only be used after seeking help from a canine behaviourist or trainer).

This piece of equipment is composed of five little metal discs on a key chain. It's a

great interrupter of unwanted behaviours and a good way of reinforcing a command. We conditioned this to the word 'No' and immediately it had a profound impact on Jonty's behaviour. He stopped barking and showing aggressive behaviour towards me, began to calm down and the process of actually working with him could start.

We began by doing some basic obedience training in the kitchen. Jonty was extremely responsive to this so we pushed him further by taking him outside. However, before leaving the house we started working on the correct way in which he should leave.

Jonty was a typical dog who wanted to barge his way through the door and was eager to get outside. However, after several minutes' training he became extremely relaxed and took to the training even more. Once outside we continued with basic obedience before we upped the anti and introduced other people and

other dogs into the mix.

When using 'teacher' dogs it's hugely important they're consistent and reliable in their behaviour towards other dogs. Initially, we worked with 'teacher' dogs on a lead near to Jonty, continuing with basic obedience. Once we were happy with Jonty's calm demeanour, we continued to apply pressure to him, now working the other dogs off the lead around him.

### STEPS TO SUCCESS

This was the first time the family had been able to exercise Jonty in the lovely public field right in front of their house. Lots of people and dogs use it, but Jonty's past behaviour had always prevented them from being able to exercise him in the field with them.

Once Jonty was comfortable with one dog, we added other

# character



## Training & behaviour

dogs into the situation. If, at any time, Jonty's behaviour became excited, or we could see him becoming overly bold, by using the word 'No' (which we had conditioned with the training discs) we were able to interrupt the behaviour, which allowed him to calm down and continue the interaction successfully.

Jonty was extremely responsive to all of the training and the requests we made of him. We were able to exercise him and do some training with him with four other dogs around, all off the lead, including Jonty. This was the first time the family had been able to do this.

Jonty's owners explained that he also had an issue with people on pushbikes, and barked threateningly and became aggressive when he was on a lead and other dogs approached him. However, on this occasion we were able to test Jonty's reactions to these situations, as well as others the family would encounter on their general walks.

### TRAINING CONTINUES

Once we had finished the tests outside, we returned indoors for some additional training. Jonty's owners explained that they had

a real issue with Jonty when they opened the patio doors on the second floor of the house. The doors overlook the large field in front of the house and a road, and they told me Jonty would normally continue with his aggressive barking whenever anyone walked past. This meant that during the summer months they were unable to enjoy the doors being open because of his unruly behaviour.

After instilling some self-control and discipline into Jonty outside, we were all interested to see whether this training would have an effect on his 'normal' behaviour once the doors were opened.

To his owners' surprise, despite people and dogs walking past, there was no unwanted barking towards anyone. We found he would also allow people, in particular strangers such as myself and two assistants, to interact with him and, more importantly, handle him. This involved physical rewards of touching, and praise when he did something correctly.

### POSITIVE RESULTS

Continued training, an altered diet and changing how he is fed has meant Jonty's gone

from strength to strength with his behavioural changes.

I feel it's very important that dogs are given leadership in the home; we must remember they're social predators and need to be told what they can and can't do. It is our responsibility to show our dogs what we want them to do, and not just expect them to understand what we want.

Since my visit, in a very short space of time, Jonty's owners have experienced a huge change in his behaviour. He rarely needs to be corrected using the training discs, and has stopped displaying aggressive, noisy behaviour towards visitors, both in the home and outside.

Several visits to cricket matches have followed, and Jonty's owners are pleased to report that taking him has now become a joy. They're continuing with his training, and have started doing gundog training with him to increase his physical and mental stimulation. They report that it's great to see Jonty calm and relaxed the whole time. And although they recognise they still have work to do, the difference in him is wonderful to see.

It's important, when we look at changing a dog's behaviour,

that we also continue with basic training, both to give him more structure and to give his owners the ability to get him to follow simple commands that will aid their relationship.

I love getting updates from owners of dogs I've worked with, telling me about their continued day-to-day progress and the difference it makes to their lives.

So remember, don't just address the behaviour you're looking to change, but look at your dog's level of exercise, feeding regime and the stimulation he receives. More importantly, look at what you're training your dog to do when you think you're *not* training him. Because, trust me, they are always learning. ●

### About the author



**James Reavil** is a member of The Guild of Dog Trainers, an associate with The Canine and Feline

Behavioural Association, an executive with The Dog Safety Education Executive and a trainer with The Gundog Club. He runs Cwnsaethu Dog Behaviour and Training.



Jonty is now a confident, settled, much-loved member of the family.



# Yuletide yums!

Treat your dog this Christmas – the healthy way!



**A**s dog-lovers, we consider our canine companions to be part of the family and they too deserve a special gift this Christmas. 8in1 offers a complete range of specialist pet treats so you will be able to find a tasty present to suit your dog whatever his size, dietary requirements or favourite flavour.

As a nation, we love to spoil our pets at Christmas time. However obesity is now one of the most pressing health issues affecting our four-legged friends, so it's vital to choose healthy stocking fillers for your pet this Christmas.

## DELICIOUS DELIGHTS

The 8in1 Delights range is a great option for pet stockings. Not only are they incredibly tasty, but they're also low in fat – so perfect for owners who want to treat their dogs while keeping them fit, happy and healthy.

## Did you know?

**8in1 Delights Dental range comprise chewy rawhide snacks with wrapped chicken meat that offer even greater dental care and fresher breath due to the added teeth-cleaning minerals.**

**Continued chewing of these tasty treats helps remove the plaque which so often leads to tartar formation and other dental problems, usually indicated by the presence of bleeding gums and bad breath.**

Developed by vets and loved by pets, the combination of real meat wrapped within rawhide will result in your dog chewing through every last piece, meaning long-lasting enjoyment and much less mess for you!

## Seasonal fun

**Creating a stocking can be a fun and rewarding activity for both owners and their dogs. Many people now customise a Christmas stocking for their four-legged friend, and the smell of some tasty treats inside will encourage your dog to unwrap his presents – adding to the theatre and enjoyment of giving him a gift.**

These 8in1 treats are available in a number of varieties:

- Original – chicken wrapped in rawhide.
- Strong – for dogs with stronger jaws.
- Dental – chicken wrapped in rawhide with added minerals for extra oral care.

No artificial flavours or colours are used and Delights are also available in a variety of different sizes for large and small dogs.

## MINI MARVELS

For an extra special stocking surprise, dogs will drool over 8in1 MINIS' festive flavours. These bite-size treats are a healthy supplement to your dog's diet and come in three delicious varieties, which are perfectly suited for a dog who wants a taste of Christmas:

- Beef & Apple.
- Chicken & Carrots.
- Lamb & Cranberry.

All deliciously tasty and low in fat, 8in1 MINIS have been created with a gluten-free formula and contain no added sugar without compromising on taste.

● For more information about 8in1's range of specialist dog treats, visit [www.8in1.eu/en](http://www.8in1.eu/en) or email [info@8in1.co.uk](mailto:info@8in1.co.uk)





# “Not *just* a dog!”



**Rebecca Ashworth** shares her experience of a remarkable friendship that's left a lasting impression.

“**B**ut it's just a dog” are the words I often hear when I talk about how my dogs have shaped my life and career.

To think of my dogs as ‘just’ anything is an alien concept to me, as they bring so much joy, challenge and enjoyment to my life.

My story starts just shy of 10 years ago, when I was a fresh-faced teen sitting my GCSEs and facing the world of work possibilities. As a family we have always had dogs, and that was one reason why, 15 years ago, my dad decided to switch his career in the police

force into its dog section.

I remember the first dog he brought home – a bear of a German Shepherd Dog, sand-coloured and an absolute softie! It would be the start of many puppies and dogs arriving in the home, and also the dog that helped shape my childhood – Rusty.

He arrived at 12 weeks old; a sweet little working Cocker Spaniel pup, who I instantly fell in love with. Rusty was destined to be a sniffer dog, but his tennis ball drive was less than to be desired, so much so that during one training session, he fell asleep on an old bed

rather than perform his search work. Needless to say, his service career was cut short.

Rusty was due to be rehomed through the police, but fell on all four paws with my late grandmother who adored him. I went to visit him at Granny's every day and practised obedience, took photographs of him, and even began a little bit of dog showing. Little did I know that later, at the age of 23, I would have him to thank for the great working lifestyle I now have.

## DREAM DOG

The showing career didn't last long, not least because Rusty was working-orientated, but also because my dad found it tedious and a little boring. This, however, didn't stop us

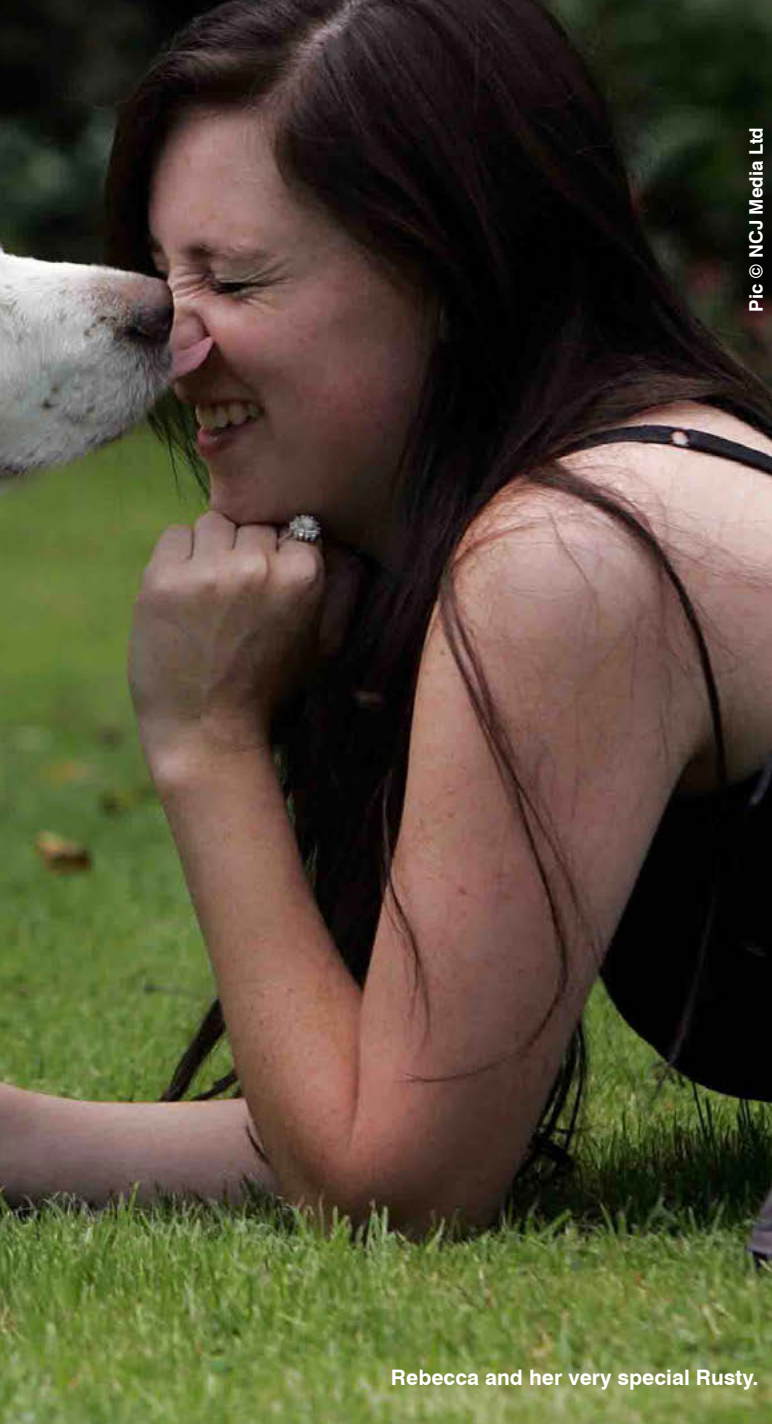
from qualifying for Crufts (in handling, not showing of course). Sadly, as Dad was the taxi driver, I had to find a new hobby. Cue agility.

I remember well my first taste of this new activity. It was a warm day at a little local show and I had taken Rusty along with the family.

I was fascinated by a dog agility display by a local club, and was invited to try out with one of the trainers who, at the time, scared the living daylights out of me. Jim, resplendent in his big leather hat, is the reason I can run around an agility course without getting lost.

I was hooked on the sport from then on, and my ‘chauffeur’, thankfully, enjoyed watching this sport from the sidelines a lot more.





Pic © NCJ Media Ltd

Rebecca and her very special Rusty.

In a nutshell, our agility career spanned several years – all the way up to grade 7 and several trips to Crufts, with the most memorable visit resulting in a 4th place.

Rusty was a dream dog to own and compete with, and a great dog to help teach others who were just learning the sport. At the age of 19 I set up my own little fun agility club, basing it at a local horse-riding arena, and called it Raven River Agility, after Rusty's Kennel Club name of Ravenriver Rock.

I never imagined that, four years later, I would be running upwards of 12 classes a week and running fun shows with over 150 dogs entered – all under the banner and logo of Rusty, the dog that started it all.

## UPS & DOWNS

After my grandma passed away, Rusty and I spent the next six years embarking on a life involving agility, showing, handling, working trails, Pets As Therapy, modelling (yes, really, just give him a Google!), a TV stint on *Animal Planet*, and a whole host of other things that made for a very interesting CV.

Rusty also led me to my photography career. After spending countless hours posing for me, I have him to thank for my natural ability, keen eye – and now one of the most popular dog photography companies in the North East, Sit Stay Capture.

But, you may wonder, why do I talk about Rusty in the past tense? Well, some people say your life can be turned upside

down in a matter of minutes – for me, it was a week.

One Monday night in October 2013, Rusty suddenly became ill. It was completely out of the blue, and nothing that could have been predicted.

Sparing you the details, my beautiful, gentle old man was watched carefully over the four days that followed. The bloating didn't get worse, but it didn't get better either. We had to endure the wait until the biopsy results came back, and I didn't sleep for the entire time. I cried every night, and prayed that whatever it was could be fixed. Death was never on the cards, and until the Thursday night it hadn't crossed my mind.

As I looked into my boy's eyes I could see despair in them; he was uncomfortable, unhappy and tired. As an owner, friend and decision maker, I knew that the time was coming where I would need to put his interests first, rather than my need to keep him with me.

Friday came, and with it the phone call I will never forget. You know you spend your whole time wishing that results would come quicker, but when the phone rings you sit staring at it, unable to pick it up.

The first words from my vet were "Rebecca, have you got someone with you?". It was 4.30pm on a Friday afternoon and my world disintegrated. The next few minutes were a blur; I distinguished the word 'tumour' and then passed the phone to my dad.

I stepped outside, fell onto my knees and wailed like a child. I had 90 minutes to come to terms with the fact that the vet was going to turn up and that was it.

It was one of the hardest moments of my life and it took six months to stop feeling angry and bitter at being cheated out of a full life with Rusty. At only eight years old he really should have had a lot longer left.

## "THEY'RE MY LIFE"

With every cloud, however, comes a silver lining – or in this case, a white lining. I have the privilege of owning Rusty's son Jake – who is simply amazing – alongside my rescue dog Lucy, and puppy Olly. They pulled me through a very dark time in my life. I had no choice but to

get up on Saturday morning, and every morning thereafter, despite one less mouth to feed and lead to put round me.

Jake has followed in his dad's footsteps, with several modelling jobs already under his collar, a silver agility warrant and achieving competition grade 7 – all before he hits the age of three!

My dogs are part of my life, my work and take up 70 per cent of my time, even when I'm not teaching or taking photographs. So my dogs will never be 'just' anything; instead they will continue to be my best friends, colleagues and teachers. Through loss I have gained a new-found respect for my dogs, and treasure every day I have with my furry four-legged family members.

So, the moral of the story...

A dog is not just a dog when that dog has taught you more than any adult, university book, course or state education ever will; when he has taught you compassion, responsibility, love and opened doors for opportunities that no human ever could; when he has made more of an impact on people's lives than you or I ever might. That is when a dog is not just a dog, and if people are unable to understand that then it's them I feel sorry for.

Dogs are amazing creatures, with huge hearts, a soul, and the most fabulous personalities. We are lucky that they choose to work with us, live with us, and let us learn from them. We don't 'own' these animals, we are simply borrowing them so they can teach us so many wonderful things.

I hope everyone in their lifetime can have a dog or pet like Rusty, because they will be a better person for it. ●

## About the author



**Rebecca Ashworth** lives in Northumberland with her three working Cocker Spaniels, Lucy,

Jake and Olly. She works part-time for a veterinary group and the rest of the week runs her agility training classes and pet photography business. Weekends usually include photoshoots, agility competitions, and the occasional day off.



# Film star Pudsey!



Dancing duo  
Ashleigh  
Butler and her  
talented pet  
Pudsey.

**Dogs Monthly** caught up with Ashleigh Butler and her superstar dancing dog Pudsey to find out what exciting events life has delivered since they won *Britain's Got Talent*.

**Dogs Monthly:** It's been two years since you and Pudsey won *Britain's Got Talent* (BGT). What have been your highlights since then?

**Ashleigh Butler:** Since winning BGT we've had such an amazing time. All the experiences that we've shared have been incredible.

My personal top three would be performing at *The Royal Variety Performance*, going to America and making *Pudsey the Dog: The Movie*!

**DM:** Explain some of the funniest or bizarre moments you've had since winning BGT.

**AB:** We've had so many laughs and good times. Working in panto for seven weeks at a time is so much fun, and there

was always someone joking around backstage.

When we went to America for five weeks I had many 'pinch myself' moments – the most bizarre was sitting next to film legend Morgan Freeman on the *Jay Leno Show*!

**DM:** Tell us about the new film...

**AB:** The film starts with Pudsey all on his own on the streets of London. He thinks he is happy with this and doesn't need anyone else, but then he meets a family and ends up moving with them to a farm in a village called Chuffington.

The family is a little broken, and that's where Pudsey comes in. He causes a lot of trouble and mayhem (which he secretly

enjoyed), but he saves the day in the end and brings the family closer together.

The film is quintessentially British and a real heart-warmer with plenty of humour along the way and, of course, Pudsey dances.

**DM:** How is Pudsey – did he take well to being a film star?

**AB:** He loved it as it was completely different to doing an HTM [heelwork to music] routine. He had to learn new things for the film, including sign language so that I could tell him what to do from behind the camera.

**DM:** Were there any challenging moments during filming and where did you go on location?

**AB:** Every day is different when making a film. It can be challenging, from controlling the public to filming with animals that have a mind of their own. They were long days, but Pudsey had plenty of time to rest and take naps while the crew were changing sets and camera angles.

The movie was filmed mainly at a horse livery farm near Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, which was such an amazing place to spend two weeks. The *Black Beauty* series was filmed there during the 1970s and it still looks exactly the same. Pudsey loved it there, as there were fields and woods to run around in.

**DM:** Have you any other dogs you're working with at the moment? Tell us about them and your hopes for them.

**AB:** I do have my young dog Sullivan, who is unbelievably cheeky. He loves learning tricks and doing agility training, and he makes me laugh every day. He comes along with us

whenever we're working on a long project, like the film and panto.

**DM:** How has (if it has) fame changed you and your family's lives?

**AB:** I think it's actually brought my family closer together. We all have to help each other out.

My mum comes along with me so that I have someone to look after Pudsey when I am having my hair/make-up done or rehearsing, which means she is also with me when I am away on long projects for months at a time. It can be difficult for the rest of my family at home, but it really makes us appreciate our time together.

My friends have been there for me right from the start, and they have all been really supportive.

**DM:** What do you see yourself doing in the future?

**AB:** Hopefully Pudsey will get the chance to do another film, and I would also like to learn more about training dogs for TV and film work.

I love TV presenting, and working on CBBC's show *Who Let The Dogs Out?* was an amazing experience. I've done some other small bits of presenting and had some great feedback. I hope to try and carry it on and see where it takes me.

Whatever happens though, I will continue to train Pudsey and Sullivan. I can't see me ever giving up training dogs! ●

## Want more Pudsey?

● *Pudsey the Dog: The Movie* is out on DVD now and costs £12.99 from Amazon; the book of the film costs £6.99 and is available from bookshops (ISBN: 9 780 34912 427 8) or Amazon.

● Ashleigh and Pudsey appear in the pantomime *Dick Whittington* at Bristol Hippodrome Theatre from 6 December 2014 to 4 January 2015. Tel. 0844 871 3012 for information and to book tickets.



# FURtastic!

Getting a new dog? Then help keep him, and your home, spick and span with FURminator.

Choose FURminator's My FURst Groomer for a hair-free home!



Advertising feature



PROFESSIONAL PET PRODUCTS

## Top tips

- FURminator deShedding tools are extremely easy to use: simply work through the coat using gentle strokes in the direction of the hair growth, allowing you to groom even sensitive areas of your dog's body.
- To choose the perfect tool for your dog, select either the short or long hair model that's matched to your dog's body size for a truly customised grooming experience.

**T**here is always lots of excitement when new four-legged friends are welcomed into families. To ensure everything runs smoothly it's important everything is prepared for your new arrival – and that the responsibility, time and effort required in looking after and grooming your new pet is not underestimated.

## PREPARE FOR THE NEW ARRIVAL

Grooming is a key consideration once your new dog has arrived. Ideally, you should research the breed beforehand so you are aware of his coat type and its associated characteristics.

## Did you know?

**FURminator's My FURst Groomer (RRP £17.59) is the perfect tool if your new addition is a puppy. It's specially designed to offer a soothing, massaging experience that your pup will enjoy, while keeping his hair clean and healthy.**

Wavy coats, for example, as found on Poodles and Bichon Frise, can easily knot and have a tendency to become dry. It's therefore crucial to equip yourself with the right tools for the job, choosing combs and brushes that will make the experience as fulfilling as it can be for both you and your pet.

Despite the difference in coats between breeds, there is no such thing as a dog that doesn't shed. Unwanted, loose hair is one of the most complained about problems for dog owners and can affect all dogs at one time or another, with the amount of shedding dependent upon the breed and time of year. So, forewarned is forearmed when it comes to dealing with this – and FURminator offers the perfect solution!

## FURminator fact

**Regular grooming is a fantastic and rewarding way to bond with your new pet, and also help him to feel calm and relaxed in your presence.**

## TOOLS FOR THE JOB

FURminator deShedding tools greatly reduce the level of shedding, helping your clothes, sofas and carpets remain free from pet hair.

These tools feature a stainless steel edge, which can be used to quickly and effectively remove moulting hair from both undercoat and top coat, without cutting or damaging your dog's delicate skin and surface coat.

The loose hair, which is caught in this steel edge, can be easily removed from the tool by using the FURrejector button, allowing for easy, one-handed use.

● For more information about FURminator products, visit [www.furminator.net/en](http://www.furminator.net/en)

FURminator products are stocked at good pet stores, including Pets at Home, Jollies, The Range and Pets Corner.



Pamper your puppy with a My FURst Groomer.



## Training made easy **4**

# “No nipping”

Top trainer **Sue Williams** shows you how to stop puppies from biting.

**M**outhing and grabbing clothing is one of the most common problems people seek my help with; so much for cute, cuddly puppies... Often the problem is so bad the owners look like they have been self-harming!

### WHY DO THEY DO IT?

Puppies naturally use their mouths and, unfortunately, their needle-sharp puppy teeth to interact, play and explore. This behaviour starts while they are tiny and in the litter. It serves a really useful purpose as it teaches them how hard, or not, to bite, particularly each other, in play. This learning process, which takes place with their siblings and mum, is known as bite inhibition.

If you observe young pups playing, when one bites another too hard the other

puppy squeals and stops playing leaving the culprit looking really sorry. This can be mimicked by us yelping and stopping play. This method is effective in teaching bite inhibition (“Don’t bite me hard”), but the big problem lies in the fact it tends to only be effective with pups up to the age of eight weeks or so.

It’s really important, therefore, to teach pups that under no circumstances should they take hold of, mouth or bite human flesh or clothing, no matter how gently they do this.

As with all training and teaching, consistency is the key to success and you must ensure that no one does anything to encourage your puppy to mouth. This is particularly true when it comes to other people; it’s amazing how many people actually offer their fingers to young puppies’ mouths and allow them to chew them!

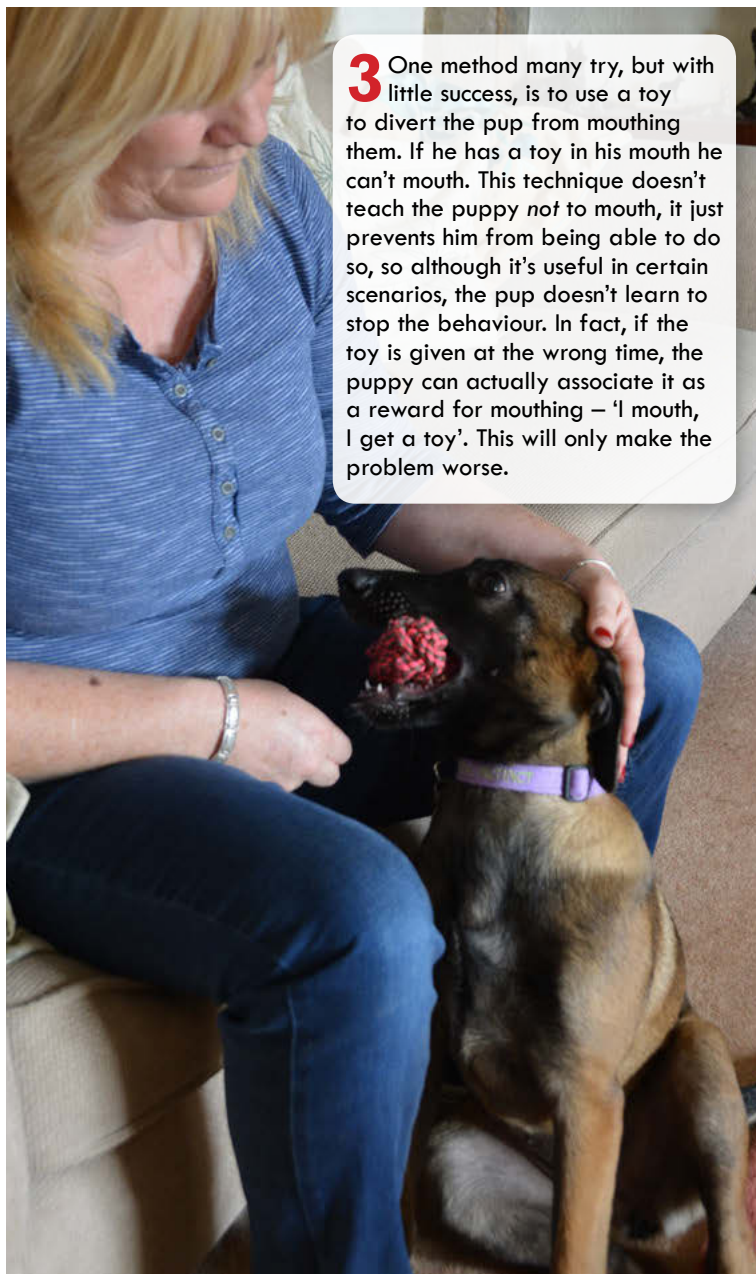
### TEACHING A PUP NOT TO MOUTH

Mouthing gets worse and harder the more excited a puppy is, so you need to have calm interactions and try not to over-stimulate him.

**1** As you can see here, puppy Kali is excited...

**2** ...and is now mouthing my hand. This is something that needs to stop!

**3** One method many try, but with little success, is to use a toy to divert the pup from mouthing them. If he has a toy in his mouth he can’t mouth. This technique doesn’t teach the puppy *not* to mouth, it just prevents him from being able to do so, so although it’s useful in certain scenarios, the pup doesn’t learn to stop the behaviour. In fact, if the toy is given at the wrong time, the puppy can actually associate it as a reward for mouthing – ‘I mouth, I get a toy’. This will only make the problem worse.





**4** I always employ conditioning techniques to teach puppies [see the April 2014 issue].

I use a word that tells them when they are doing something I want, which is followed by a reward; and one that tells them when they are doing something wrong, which causes a reward to be withdrawn.

This word association is important for mouthing and grabbing problems, and once the puppy understands what is required it speeds up the teaching process.

By conditioning your puppy, you can use the word 'No', which will tell him to stop...

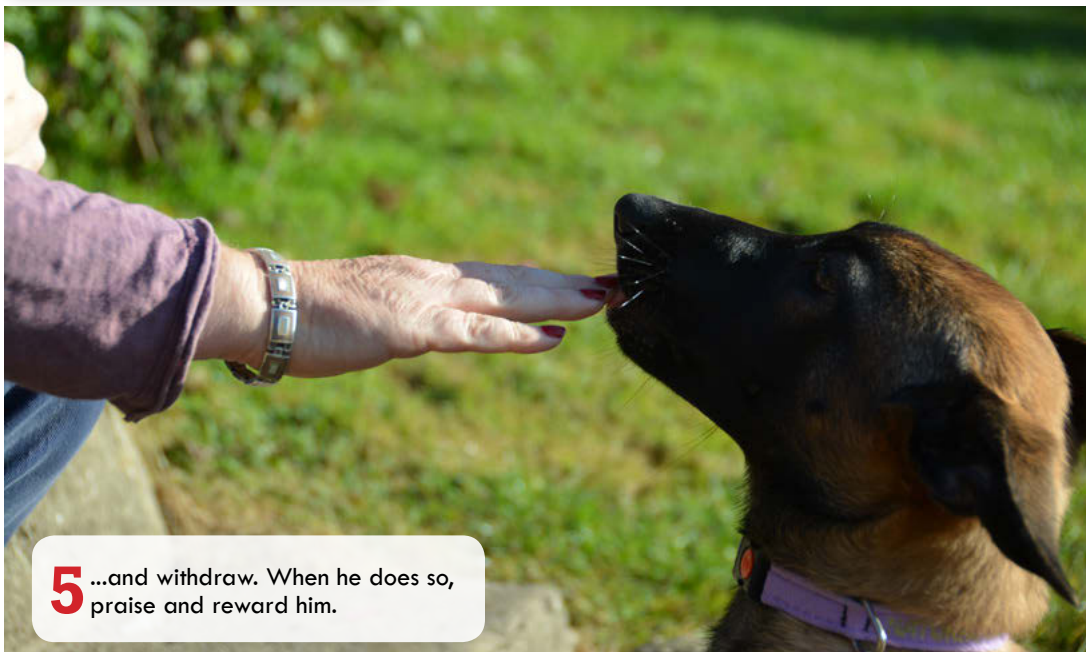


## Taste tactic

Another effective method of stopping pups from mouthing hands and other things, is to spray your hands with a taste deterrent. I recommend one called Grannicks Bitter Apple – pups hate the taste, but the product is harmless. Here's how to use it:

- Before interacting with your pup, spray your hands and lower arms. Do this when he isn't present, then put the bottle away, bring your puppy in and stroke and interact with him as normal.

- As your puppy mouths your hands or clothing, say "No". He will taste the bitter apple and withdraw. The unpleasant taste will reinforce the 'No' command, and it won't be long before you don't need to spray your hands with the 'nasty stuff'.



**5** ...and withdraw. When he does so, praise and reward him.



**6** I like to reinforce the withdraw response with a high-value food reward, such as a Natural Instinct chicken heart.



For a detailed yet easy-to-follow guide on how to condition puppies, see the April 2014 issue of **Dogs Monthly** – turn to p74 to order a back copy.

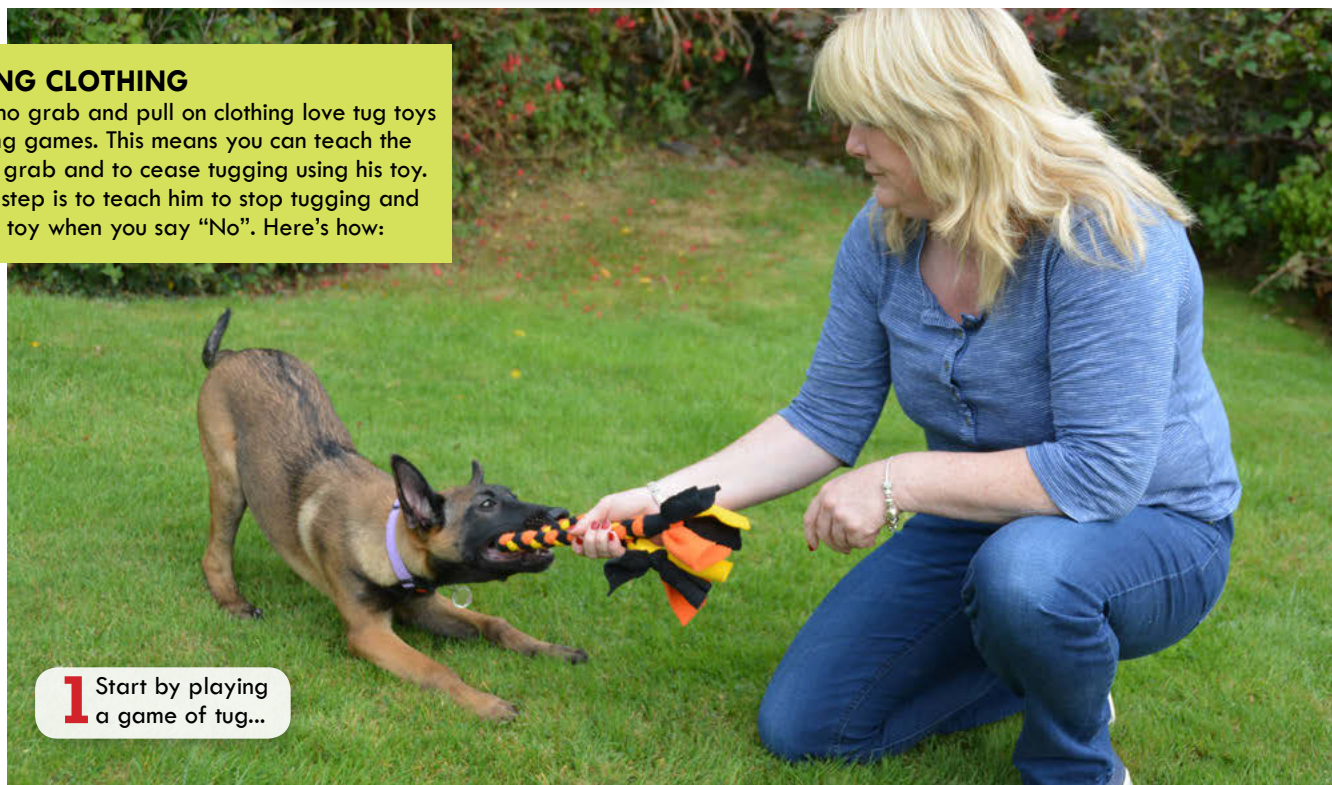


## GRABBING CLOTHING

Puppies who grab and pull on clothing love tug toys and tugging games. This means you can teach the pup not to grab and to cease tugging using his toy.

The first step is to teach him to stop tugging and release his toy when you say "No". Here's how:

**1** Start by playing a game of tug...



**2** ...then release the tension from the toy by moving it gently towards the puppy (by doing this he is more likely to let go) and say "No"...



**3** ...and then "Good" as he releases the toy. Give him a high-value food reward.



## Natural Instinct®

Dog & Cat food as nature intended

### Rewarding your puppy

Reinforcement by rewarding a good response during puppy training is key to success. Natural Instinct offers a wide range of 100 per cent natural, highly

palatable treats that make ideal high-value rewards to use during training.

Natural Instinct British Chicken Hearts are dehydrated, making them

easy to handle. Made simply from 100 per cent British chicken heart, this natural product makes for a perfect treat, and can be used as a textured topping to any raw meal for dogs or cats too. Also available in an organic variety, these treats are veterinary approved and endorsed by

leading behaviourist and trainer Sue Williams BSc GODT (MT) MCFBA, chair of the Guild of Dog Trainers.

● Brought to you by Natural Instinct – dog and cat food as nature intended. Visit [www.naturalinstinct.com](http://www.naturalinstinct.com) for more information on its range of treats.



**4** The next stage is to teach your puppy some self control and that to resist the temptation of grabbing an article is rewarding. To do this, use the tug toy again.

Start with holding the toy so it is stationary near the puppy's mouth. If he attempts to take hold of it say "No" and immediately he stops say "Good" and reward him with a tasty treat.



**5** Once he's got the hang of that, start to move the toy around – but not too rapidly at first since he is much more likely to grab a rapidly moving object.



**6** Again reward the desired response. Your aim is to make ignoring the moving object more rewarding than making a grab for it.

This instruction easily transfers to other situations, so when your pup attempts to grab at clothing and you say "No" he will understand and stop.

Over a short period of time, given consistent training and directions, the biting and mouthing behaviour will stop completely. ●

### About the author



**Sue Williams**  
BSc is the chairwoman of the Guild of Dog Trainers and a member of the

Canine and Feline Behaviour Association, and specialises in dog training and behaviour modification. Sue is passionate about teaching using methods based on understanding and communication. She runs The Canine Centre in North Wales.



# “We saved Tilly – and she saved us”

Touching and inspiring, **Richard Aspinall**’s account of life with a rescued Westie is bound to strike a chord with many dog-lovers.



Ex-puppy farm Westie Tilly now enjoys the sort of life all dogs deserve.

**F**or my wife Angie and I, Tilly’s story began around two years ago when we met her in a garden in Kent. This little West Highland White Terrier (Westie) was shy and walked with her tail down. She stayed close to her temporary foster carer, hiding and hoping no one would notice her. Clearly Tilly was a dog that had had a hard life.

When a pigeon landed in the garden she slowly approached it and made more of a cough than a bark. You could tell she knew what to do in theory; somehow she knew she ought to bark, but she hadn’t had much practice at being a dog... Still, the pigeon cleared off and in a small way something was stirring in this much abused little dog.

Tilly, it turned out, had been a breeding bitch in a puppy farm. Often unlicensed, and flouting welfare requirements, these battery prisons for churning out pups treat their

inhabitants terribly. When the bitches are worn out having litter after litter, they are either killed or dumped to fend for themselves. In the case of the latter, they are in poor health, are traumatised and often end up in rescue shelters.

When Tilly was found, foraging on London’s streets, she was taken to the pound. It’s hard to imagine what a sorry sight she must have been, but with three days to go before being put to sleep, a rescue organisation found her. She was in a pitiful state and needed to have her matted coat shaved off and several teeth removed.

## LIFE BEFORE TILLY

I had grown up with animals and there were always dogs in my life, from the grumpy Jack Russell of my childhood to my adorable yet decidedly stupid Border Collie cross in my twenties.



Angie had grown up without a dog as a family pet and couldn't understand why I would fuss and greet every dog I met. She now says she didn't realise that they are all little people too! She had always expected that one day we'd move to the country and I'd get a dog that would spend his days on the land with me, getting covered in mud, and we'd both be banned from the lounge. That was until we met one particular dog that changed everything...

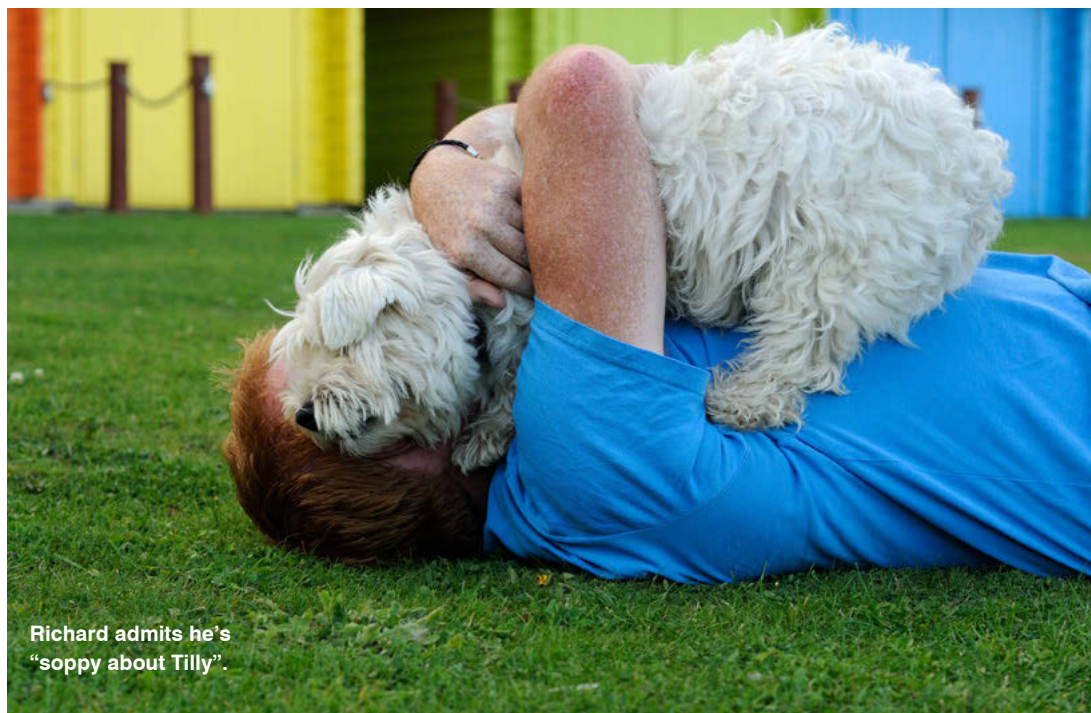
We were in a kitchen shop of all things, and I was choosing a new coffee maker – something Angie as a tea drinker had no interest in. I looked down to see her crouched down with an old Westie resting its paw on her knee and staring into her eyes. Angie was staring back and she seemed to be smitten.

This chance encounter led to the biggest change in our lives and set in motion the events that would bring Tilly into our home and hearts...

## LIFE-CHANGING SITUATION

As the months passed, Angie would often talk of that doggy encounter and often noticed other Westies as they trotted alongside their owners around our home town.

"I can see us getting a little dog one day," she'd say, and we'd often talk about the dogs



Richard admits he's "soppy about Tilly".

Pics © Richard Aspinall

we met and I'd encourage her to say hello to dogs in the street and on the beach. It became clearer that a dog for us was on the horizon one day – in the distant future – but all that was to suddenly change.

During the spring of 2011 we were dealt quite a blow when Angie abruptly lost most of her hearing – something called 'sudden sensorineural hearing loss'. She'd had some hearing loss since turning 30 and she already used hearing aids, but this sudden loss was profound and she was told her left ear

was effectively 'dead'.

We coped as best we could, despite little encouraging news from the audiologists. Angie was angry and upset and, above all, she was isolated from everyone around her; she saw less of her friends and work was extremely difficult.

As she read about deafness and tried to accept her life as a deafened person she kept coming across and reading about hearing dogs and the wonderful work they do. Sadly, however, we also learned how hard it is to get one of these

amazing companions, given that the waiting list is so long and the need so great.

I suggested to Angie that we just get a 'normal' dog for the time being, as most dogs would let us know if the postman was ringing the doorbell and offer the security that a fine pair of ears brings when Angie was home alone.

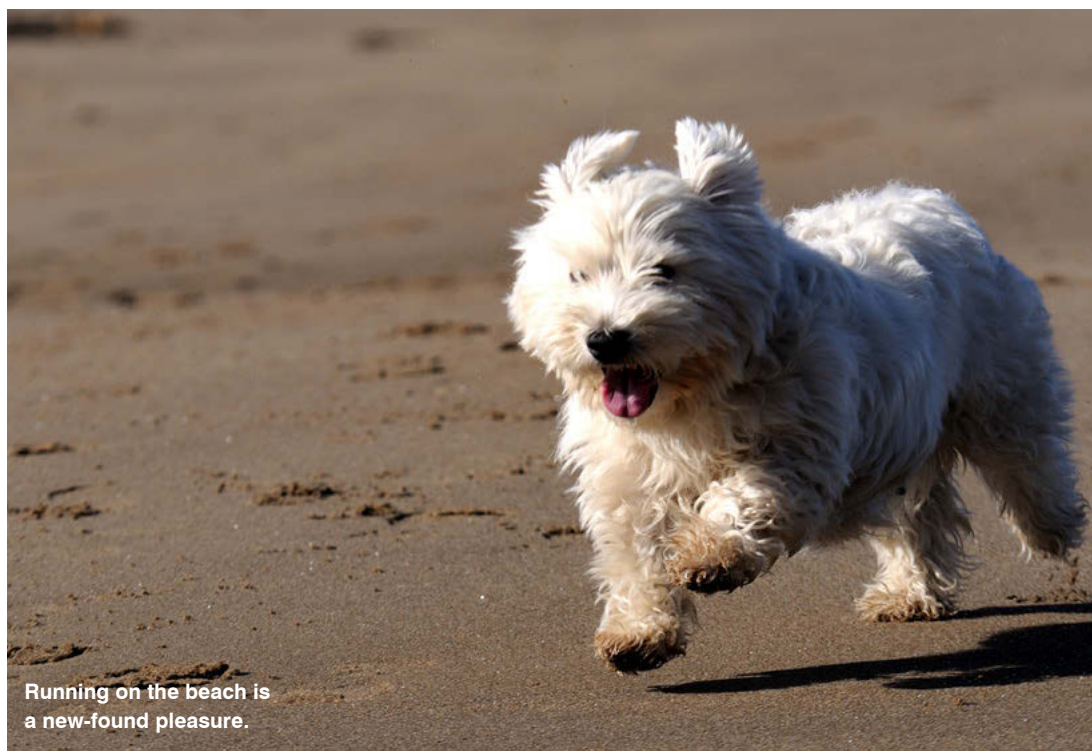
I said: "One day we may well apply for a hearing dog, but perhaps we could help a dog who could also help us and get a rescue dog."

By the late summer, after much to-ing and fro-ing and checking up on who'd be available for dog-sitting duties, we had decided that we would try to find a dog and began looking at rescue websites in Yorkshire.

## "HER FACE SAID IT ALL!"

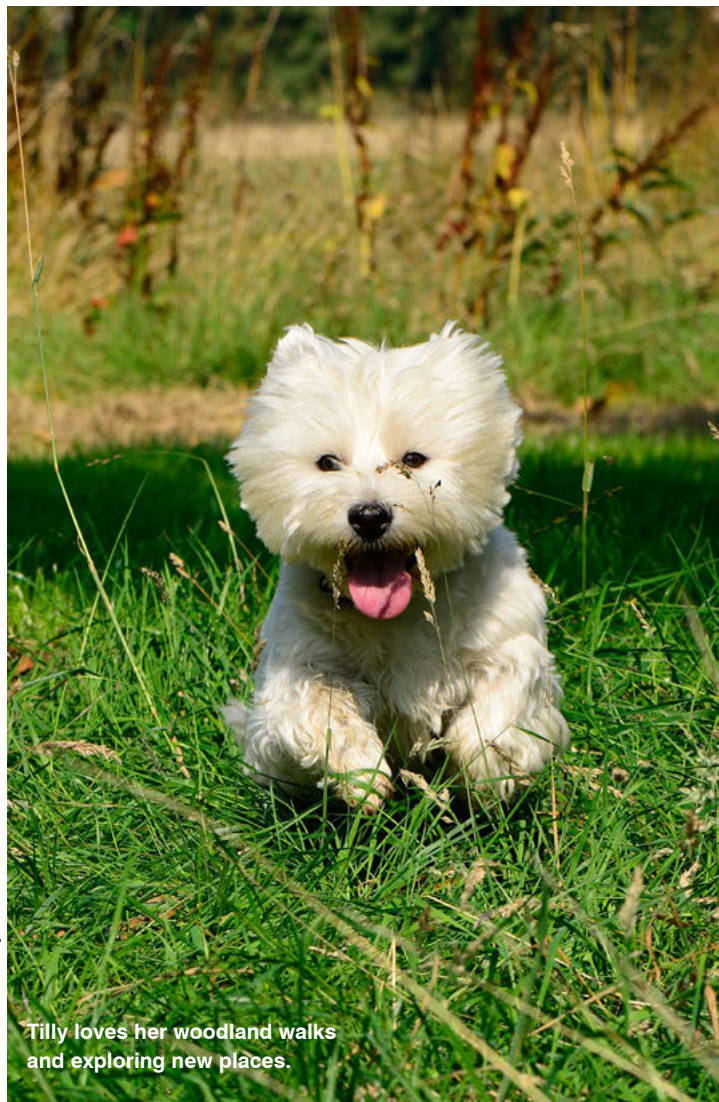
We knew we didn't want a puppy and that we wanted an older dog, but none were showing up locally that would be ideal as a first dog for Angie – so many, sadly, had issues of one sort or another that meant an extremely experienced owner was required. We cast the net further and found a Westie in Kent, a dog that 'loved cuddles' according to her write-up.

To this day I remember Angie filling out the online form, saying: "I'm going to send it... are you sure?" And we'd have another look at the pics and at



Running on the beach is a new-found pleasure.





Tilly loves her woodland walks and exploring new places.

Pics © Richard Aspinall

some time around midnight she finally pressed 'send'.

After a home visit and re-fencing the garden we were accepted and Angie travelled the 200 miles to Kent to collect Tilly. All the way home she kept sending me pictures of Tilly on her knee. When I picked them both up at the station, Tilly wagged her tail a little at me and my wife's face said it all. We had a new member of the family and we loved her.

Within days Tilly settled in and I couldn't believe how quickly she accepted her new life, but she was still baffled by much of what was around her.

Over the course of the next six months we introduced Tilly to the countryside; to the smells of heath and woodland and sights of other animals and dogs. It was wonderful to see her gradually changing from that timid little creature who didn't know how to bark to a confident and happy little dog, revelling in her new-found

freedom and affectionate care from us.

What a different animal she is now; she runs through the woods, scattering dead leaves aside, barking her little head off as if she's been doing it all her life.

It's been a privilege to watch Tilly learn how to be a dog and there have been so many wonderful moments – the first time we let her off the lead on the beach and she realised she could run for the sheer fun of it; the first time she played with other dogs and ran with them, barking with joy; and the first time she brought her squeaky ball for me to throw are all moments that I cherish.

But what of Angie?

### "THANK YOU TILLY"

We often joke that Angie and our 'puppter' come as a pair; 'Tillangie' (like Brangelina) do everything together. They are inseparable and Tilly shares every aspect of Angie's life,



Having Tilly gives Angie lots more confidence to get out and about.

although Tilly draws the line at helping to clean out the chickens as she regards them and their pointy beaks with deep distrust.

You might think that we saved Tilly, and perhaps we did in a way by giving her a forever home, but, really, she saved us.

Life hasn't been easy over the last two years – we've had job worries, health scares and we've set up our own business – but throughout it all two things have been constant – our utter devotion to this little furball and the wholehearted trust and love she gives in return.

Tilly has given Angie confidence, she's given her someone to hug when she's down and Tilly has been her ears when Angie's own have let her down. There was a time when Angie might well have withdrawn into herself, but now a walk in the park, and even on our recent trip to London, will see Angie chatting away to strangers all eager to stroke

Tilly and hear her story.

And what about me? Well she's saved me as well I think. She's made Angie's life so much richer and more enjoyable and that'd be enough, but luckily she loves me too and I am completely soppy about her.

We Yorkshire men aren't prone to too many displays of emotion but every day I thank that little dog for what she's done after she's been treated so badly. And I'll work hard every day of the rest of her life to try to make it up to her. ●

### About the author



**Richard Aspinall** is a biologist, writer and photographer – above and below

water! He's also a keen dog walker and countryside lover and lives in Yorkshire with his journalist wife Angie, and Tilly their beloved West Highland White Terrier.



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Vet **Tim Couzens** describes how to spot, treat and manage cruciate injuries, so your dog's lameness can be resolved as quickly as possible.

# Cruciate injuries explained

Bullmastiffs are prone to cruciate injuries.

Pic © Elisabeth Hammerschmid/Shutterstock.com



**C**ruciate injuries are relatively common across all breeds of dogs, and all ages, and here I'll explain what actually happens should the cruciate ligament tear, rupture or become diseased, and what treatment options are available.

Each of the knee or stifle joints has two ligaments that span the interior of the joint between the tibia and femur – the cranial cruciate ligament (the same as the anterior cruciate ligament in humans), and the caudal cruciate ligament. Their function is to stabilise the joint, assisted by the two moon-shaped meniscal cartilages, and to prevent over-extension and rotation of the knee joint.

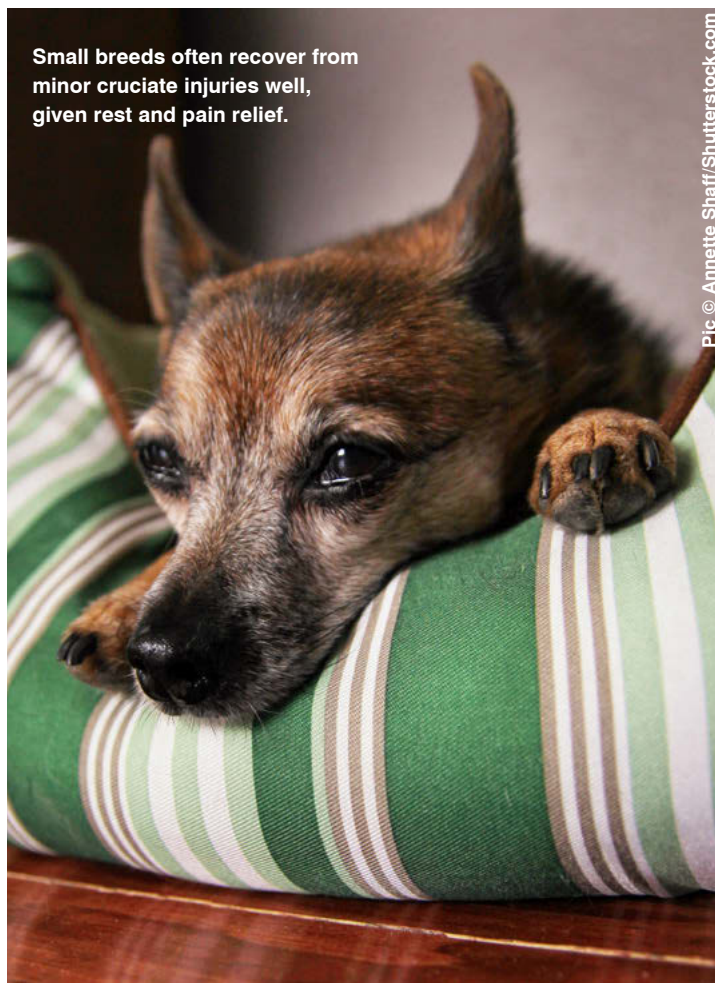
Injury to the cranial cruciate ligament is a common problem and leads to instability of the joint. Subsequent damage to other joint structures include the meniscal cartilages (which can become torn) and the cartilage of the joint surfaces, which may lead to the development of osteoarthritis. The problem varies in severity, ranging from

fairly mild cases that can be managed conservatively with the support of conventional or alternative medicine – combined with physical therapies if needed – to more severe cases that usually require surgery. This is often the case in larger breeds.

Problems occur with the cranial ligament particularly as it appears to become weaker with age and therefore subject to injury. It gradually degenerates, a bit like a rope becoming frayed bit by bit. Certain breeds of dogs are more prone to this problem, specifically Labradors, Retrievers, Rottweilers, Bullmastiffs, Boxers, Newfoundlands and West Highland White Terriers.

In contrast it's rare for the caudal cruciate ligament to be injured, and quite why the cranial cruciate ligament degenerates is not entirely understood, but may involve genetic factors and changes to the ligament structure causing it to weaken. However, from a purely physical perspective, obesity is a contributory factor

Small breeds often recover from minor cruciate injuries well, given rest and pain relief.



Pic © Annette Shaff/Shutterstock.com

Cornering at speed can put extra strain on the cruciate ligaments.



Pic © Kamil Macniak/Shutterstock.com



## Health & welfare

as this puts extra strain and stress on the ligament, as does cornering at speed and maneuvering quickly on uneven ground.

### WHEN INJURIES OCCUR

Minor injuries to the cruciate will result in just a few fibres in the ligament tearing, leading to mild lameness that resolves with rest after a week or so. The dog will be a little stiff after getting up, with the symptoms of lameness easing quickly as he walks a bit further and warms up.

More severe injuries, or repeated minor injury, can result in the ligament tearing more, either completely or enough to cause serious lameness and significant joint pain. In this case the dog will be unable to put his foot to the ground, and any movement, or someone touching the joint, will be resented. The joint may swell, and close veterinary examination could reveal that it's unstable.

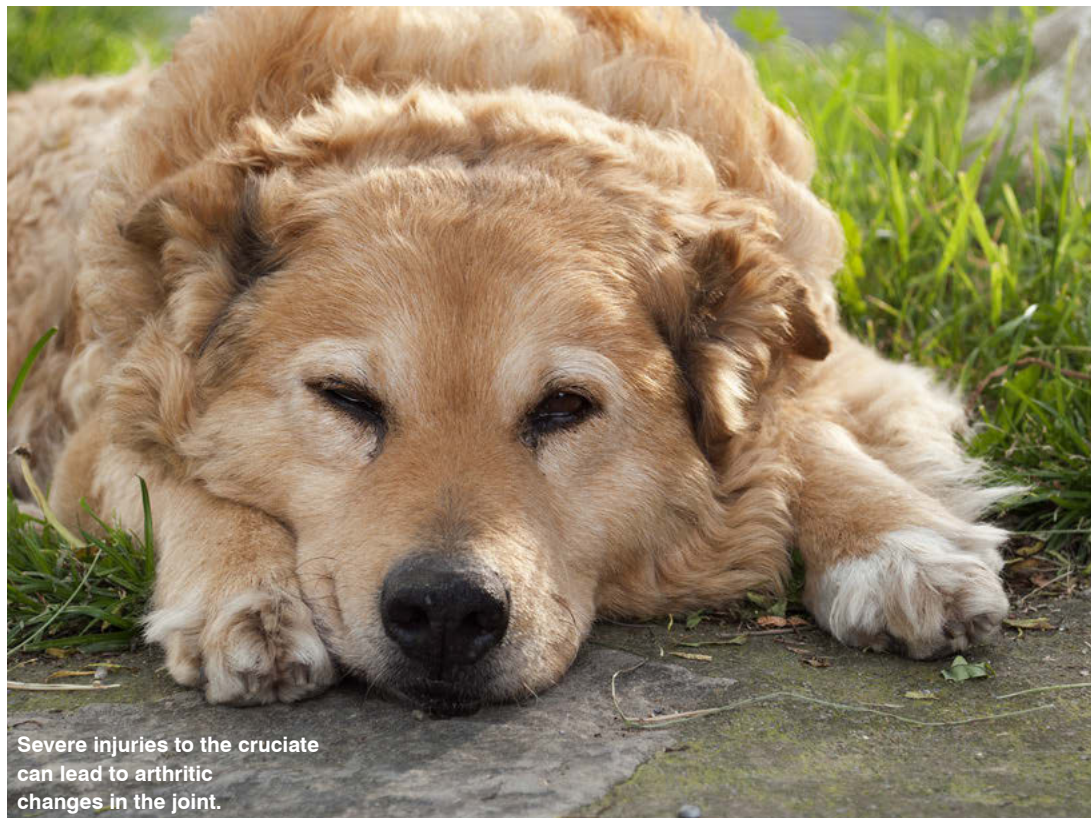
This instability can often be detected by your vet as they will be able to feel movement between the bottom of the femur and the upper surface of the tibia. This is called the anterior draw and is not a good sign.

Other diagnostic work may be needed to confirm the diagnosis, including X-rays and MRI scans, while difficult cases may need exploratory keyhole surgery to finalise the diagnosis.

With cases such as this, other problems can appear over time. The muscles of the leg will atrophy (waste), particularly the quadriceps muscle group of the upper thigh.

Affected dogs tend to sit with the affected limb straightened out in front of them, rather than tucked up, as they don't like to flex the knee due to pain. Unlike minor cruciate problems, the symptoms only ease a little with time and the dog remains persistently lame.

There will also be the subsequent development of arthritic changes, accompanied by pain, including bony changes that can distort the outline of the joint, swelling of the joint due to distention of the joint capsule, and local heat.



Severe injuries to the cruciate can lead to arthritic changes in the joint.

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

The treatment path to take depends on the severity of the injury and the size of the dog. Small breeds often do quite well with conservative treatment, particularly if the injury is not too severe. This will involve rest combined with pain relief and possibly hydrotherapy to strengthen the muscles.

Medium-sized dogs can be managed with a similar plan if the cruciate damage is minimal, while in general these and somewhat larger breeds often do better with surgery, as detailed below.

An opinion from an orthopaedic surgeon will often be the best guide as to which route to follow for each individual dog.

### CONVENTIONAL TREATMENT

- Rest, to allow healing and prevent further injury.
- Reducing obesity (if a factor) to minimise stress on the injured leg and help prevent damage to the other leg.
- Pain relief, normally non-steroidal anti-inflammatories.

### SURGICAL PROCEDURES

- Ligament replacement, which involves replacing the damaged ligament either with

tissue taken from close to the damaged joint or synthetic material. It essentially mimics the function of the cranial cruciate ligament. However, these techniques are now considered largely outdated and do not generally produce the best results. They are sometimes used in dogs with substantial damage to other structures of the joint.

- Tibial plateau levelling osteotomy (TPLO). This technique, along with tibial tuberosity advancement (see below), renders the cranial cruciate redundant by altering the geometry of the joint and, at the same time, stabilising the joint. TPLO involves making a cut in the top of the tibia and rotating the plateau (flat surface) of the tibia until the previous slope in the bone is no longer there. The bone is then fixed in this new position using a bone plate and screws.
- Tibial tuberosity advancement (TTA). This technique follows the same principle as TPLO, with a cut created in the tibia to allow a change in geometry that renders the cranial cruciate redundant. The biomechanical principles behind TTA are more complicated than those behind TPLO. The basic idea is to alter the direction of traction





from the quadriceps muscles to produce a force across the knee joint that negates the tendency for the femur to roll down the slope of the tibial joint surface, called the tibial plateau.

## ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Complementary therapies to help support and heal cruciate injuries include hydrotherapy, providing non-weight bearing exercise to help strengthen the leg and build up wasted muscles post-surgery, or in conjunction with other alternative approaches.

Acupuncture can be used for both pain relief and to stimulate ligament healing. For minor cruciate injuries this

approach can be used to heal the ligament and resolve the lameness over a period of up to 12 weeks. Supplements, including methyl sulfonyl methane (MSM), can be used to help support joints. MSM sounds like a chemical but is in fact a natural constituent of collagen, the building blocks of soft tissue such as ligaments and tendons. Giving this during healing will encourage a strong repair and strengthen the other ligaments of the joints, hopefully preventing future problems.

Homeopathic treatment options include:

● Initial use of a combination of Arnica, Ruta and Rhus tox (RRA), all in 30c potency for a few days. This can be followed

by remedies to help the ligament repair. These need to be given twice daily for up to 12 weeks.

● Argentum metallicum 6c. This can be routinely given to help with the repair of the damaged ligament by encouraging blood flow to the area. It also has a beneficial action on cartilage and bone.

● Ruta grav 6c. Classic remedy for joint problems, including damaged ligaments, but also acts positively on the periosteum and joint cartilage. It will help relieve ongoing lameness issues, help heal the damaged ligament and help stop arthritis from developing.

● Symphytum 6x. As a general joint remedy, this will help

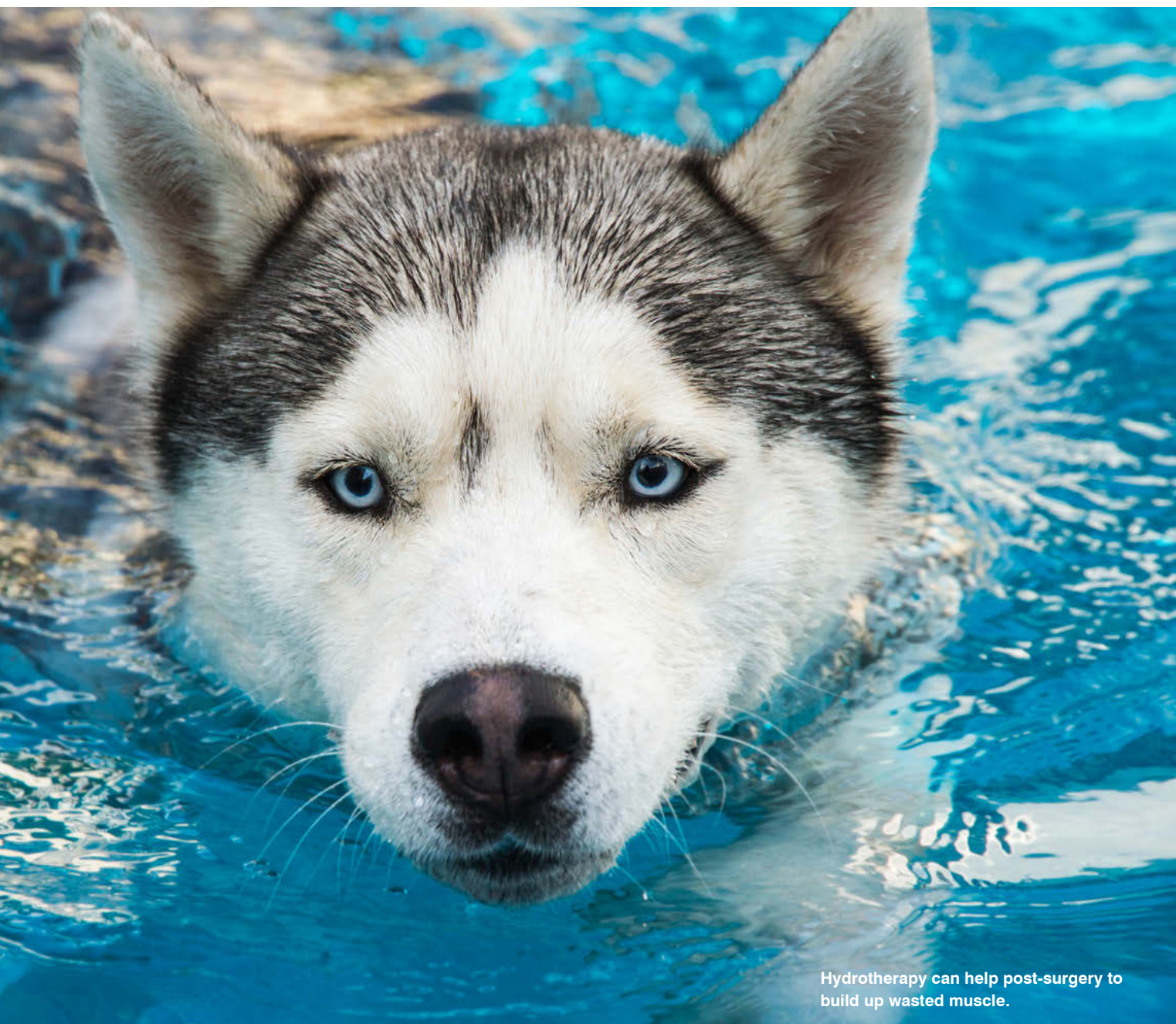
encourage a speedy repair if used in a low decimal potency as well as supporting bone, periosteum and joint cartilage. Has a specific role in relieving knee (stifle) joint pain.

● Calc phos 6x. Helps relieve joint pain and stiffness and supports the health of all bony structures including joints. ●

## About the author



**Tim Couzens**  
BVetMed, MRCVS,  
VetMFFHorn,  
CertVetAC  
runs a referral  
centre for  
complementary  
veterinary medicine near  
Lewes in East Sussex, offering  
homeopathy, acupuncture,  
herbal medicine and other  
therapies.



Hydrotherapy can help post-surgery to build up wasted muscle.



# Bark for Bach

“...and this next piece is by Poochini.”

Do dogs appreciate music? And can particular genres have an effect on their behaviour? **Claire Jackson** looks at some interesting research from the USA.

**D**oes your pet prefer Puccini to pop, or Bach to the blues? New research suggests that classical music may have a beneficial effect on canine behaviour and even improve a dog's overall well-being.

Dr Lori Kogan, associate professor at Colorado State University, analysed the effect that different types of music can have on dogs in rescue shelters. Over a period of

four months, she assessed the behaviour of 117 dogs of various breeds, all from the same kennels. Of the sample, 83 were temporary boarders and 34 were rescued Dachshunds.

“We played several different varieties of music, including one created specifically for animals, and we looked at vocalisation and body movement – sleeping or other activity – and nervous body shaking,” Dr Kogan

explains. “We found that the dogs were most relaxed when listening to classical music.”

## CALMING CLASSICS

The dogs were exposed to 45 minutes of three different genres of music – classical, heavy metal and compositions edited specifically for animals from *Through a Dog's Ear* (see ‘Balancing Bach’, page 39). The rescue shelter dogs' behaviour was recorded every five minutes. The results suggested that classical music leads to kennelled dogs spending more time sleeping and less time vocalising than when exposed to other music types, or to no music.

“There have been numerous studies that have examined the impact that classical music can have on humans and we can make certain generalisations,” Dr Kogan continues. “We know that classical music tends to relax people, and heavy metal tends to agitate or energise them, and I think we see similar trends in animals.

“My interest lies in applied research for things that make the world better for humans and animals. To me, if we can enrich a shelter environment through something that is fairly low-cost and easy to do – like music – then I think we should pay attention.”

Dogs are thought to benefit





## Classical music primer for dogs

- Pachelbel – Canon in D.
- Chopin – Nocturne No 5 in F sharp, Op 15, No 2.
- Vaughan Williams – The Lark Ascending.
- Debussy – Arabesque 1.
- Einaudi – Two Sunsets.

and Bach and overall there seemed little difference in the reaction from the dogs to the different composers.

Several companies have taken the selection process further and refined compositions especially for dogs, such as the US website Canine Lullabies, which offers classical lullabies orchestrated to the rhythm of the human heartbeat and claims to 'reduce barking, reduce hyperactivity, minimise thunder phobia, and calm whimpering puppies'.

## BALANCING BACH

Lisa Spector is co-founder of Through a Dog's Ear, an organisation that specialises in music therapy for the prevention and treatment of canine anxiety. Through a Dog's Ear provides music for owners to play to their dogs, and its portfolio includes the iCalmDog, a portable player preloaded with piano music. Lisa, a Juilliard School trained musician and dog-lover, worked closely with a veterinary neurologist to create her canine music – with fascinating results.

"We bring dogs into our world and we expect them to adjust to our human environment, filled with a variety of crazy sounds, smells and visuals," explains Lisa, who owns two Labradors – Sanchez, 11, and Gina, five. "Through a Dog's Ear music provides balance for dogs. It also calms their people. As we all know, feelings get transferred down the leash. Our dogs will sense what we are feeling, so if we can add calm to our lives, our dogs also benefit."

Through a Dog's Ear focuses on 'simple sound' and its music minimises the intricate auditory information found in most classical works. The idea is

that the details in conventional music can be too much for both humans and dogs if they are experiencing health difficulties.

However, Dr Kogan's study indicated that such edited music might not be as effective as straight classical melodies: "Both boarded and rescue dogs responded to all the classical music selections by sleeping more than they did during exposure to any other type of auditory stimulation.

"However, this is one study. There is a need for follow-up studies looking at music altered for animals before we can make a strong determination one way or another."

## SOUND & STIMULATION

There are several things to consider when exposing your dog to electronic sound.

"Dogs have a very sensitive hearing system and can often be on alert," says Lisa Spector. "Many people leave the TV on for their dog when they are home alone. But TV can be filled with all sorts of stimulating sounds – gunshots, doorbells ringing, trucks and so on.

"Even classical music (as originally written) can be very complex for dogs. A classical radio station will often play loud pieces written for a full orchestra when they are trying to energise their human listeners at 3pm, but that may not be best for calming dogs."

Of course, the music we share with our dogs must be carefully chosen and sensitively administered, but there is much to be gained from playing Mozart to your mutt.

"Sound is a potent energy that is not to be taken for granted," concludes Lisa. "It has a profound effect on all species." ●



Various classical compilation CDs are available for canines – and their owners.

from listening to music that has a moderate tempo, medium pitch and clear texture. Baroque and classical works are ideal, and some romantic era pieces are also suitable.

Last year record label Decca released *Classical Music for Dogs*, a compilation of pieces carefully selected to

delight a doggy audience. The download-only collection (available from iTunes) features works by Bach (who else?), Beethoven and Debussy, as well as Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Grieg and Rimsky-Korsakov's 'The Flight of the Bumble Bee'.

Dr Kogan's study featured works by Beethoven, Strauss

## About the author



**Claire Jackson** is a classical music journalist and editor of *International Piano*

magazine. Bow, her Miniature Dachshund, enjoys works by Mozart, Bach and Vivaldi.



## Training a Hearing Dog ⑤

**Debbie Bridges** catches up with Hearing Dogs' puppy-in-training Jasper as he gets a new grown-up look.

# Growing up fast

**I**t's surprising what a good haircut can do. I know Jasper's had his first short back and sides since we last met, and his puppy trainer, Lynda McGregor, has warned me the change is pretty radical. Even so, I'm not quite prepared for the transformation. Gone is the roly-poly puppy with the mass of soft curls and in its place is a sleek and streamlined dog-about-town.

Lynda and I agree Jasper's new 'do' makes him look properly grown-up, and being able to see his eyes is a definite bonus – but not everyone has reacted positively. "One gentleman we regularly meet on our walks says he looks like a pipe cleaner!" she laughs.

For his first experience of clipping, Jasper spent a day at Hearing Dogs HQ. "They make it fun," Lynda tells me. "The grooming is done in short bursts with the company of other dogs and games to enjoy in between."

Having put a good deal of effort into getting Jasper comfortable with being groomed, as well as gradually introducing him to the sound of clippers and dryers, Lynda was delighted to learn the event left him unfazed, particularly as

being groomed is one aspect of behaviour that's assessed for the Two Star Award. At six months, Jasper is now old enough to try for this award, and he and Lynda are busy practising everything on the not-inconsiderable list of requirements.

Response to basic commands is evaluated out of doors, and the 'Leave it' command is made more difficult with the introduction of a food distraction, which turned out to be the focus of an impromptu training session on a recent outing with Lynda's walking group.

"We crossed a field of sheep and Jasper showed no interest in them, which was great," says Lynda. "But sheep poo was a different matter – there was a chorus of 'Leave it, leave it, leave it' all the way across the field!"

Today, we're off to hone Jasper's shopping skills at John Lewis, where Hearing Dogs in training are made welcome. The town assessment element of the Two Star Award requires pups to behave appropriately in shops, walking quietly beside their handler and sitting patiently when they stop. Temptations such as sniffing the merchandise or poking a nose

into strangers' bags must also be resisted.

As we wander through the various departments, stopping every now and then, Lynda explains there's a lot more to the outing than meets the eye. "Things we might not notice will seem strange to a young dog, such as the different floor surfaces. Then there's all the unusual smells and noises."

We take in millinery, underwear (avert your eyes, Jasper) and shoes, before heading for the cafe, where things get seriously noisy. Ordinarily, you wouldn't notice the hubbub but I find I'm acutely aware of the clatter of plates and hiss of coffee machines, imagining what they must sound like to Jasper, who doesn't react.

Good manners in cafes and restaurants form an important part of the town assessment and Jasper is clearly in the zone on this one. We sit and he settles calmly beside Lynda's chair while she tells me about the latest challenge he's introduced into her life.

"He doesn't like me being on the phone," she tells me, as Jasper adopts his best 'butter wouldn't melt' look. "He'll get something in his mouth, show it to me and then run off. It's



"Make mine a ham baguette!"

attention seeking behaviour and it can be difficult to ignore if the something he's got is my glasses!" Hearing Dogs' socialisation trainer Kelly Maguire has some useful advice for tackling the problem, including practising answering the phone and throwing a treat to Jasper if he is well behaved.

As we make our way to the exit, Jasper hasn't put a paw wrong throughout our visit, which bodes well for his forthcoming assessment. ●

### About the author



**Debbie Bridges** lives in Hertfordshire with her husband, two chickens, an elderly cat, her walking companion and best friend Java, a 12-year-old German Shepherd Dog, and part-time boarder Ruby, a Lurcher X Labrador.





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# “He hates

Dogs that show aggression towards other canines can have a devastating impact on their owner's daily life. **Ross McCarthy** looks at why some dogs react this way and what you can do to improve matters.

**T**here are myriad books, scientific studies and articles out there telling you why dogs are aggressive towards others of their own kind; however, there are not many that help you out if your dog behaves in this way.

This piece is based on my experience of dogs who display aggression to others of their species, and of working with owners of such dogs. There will be no references to other people's studies; what I've found through dealing with these cases over many years works.

Often these dogs have seen supposed 'behaviour counsellors' and attended training classes, but all to no avail, leaving owners feeling abandoned, socially isolated, and often creeping around in the early hours to exercise their dogs, or driving them to remote locations where they've less chance of bumping into other dog walkers.

As with all canine behavioural problems, there is untold impact on family life, as only someone who has experienced such issues will fully understand. Some people successfully resolve the issue of aggression, some learn to manage it, some live with it, and others hand their dog over to a rescue centre, hoping he'll be rehabilitated and rehomed. Some, sadly, have the dog euthanised.

Fortunately, there is light at the end of the tunnel and the vast majority of dogs who display aggression towards other dogs can be improved. Even the most hideous cases can be helped – sometimes

to perfection, sometimes to satisfaction and sometimes, as the least favourable result, they can be successfully managed.

## CHANGING TIMES

The way we live with dogs has altered greatly over the past 30 years. Dogs are no longer able to roam around on their own all day through quiet, car-free streets; instead they're confined to the home, and stricter canine control laws introduced in towns and cities nationwide mean they have less and less freedom. Dogs cannot be dogs.

All this has a serious impact on their psychological well-being. Thirty years ago a dog behaviourist was unheard of, but now thousands work across the UK resolving behavioural issues that are a result of owner lifestyle and modern society.

Despite that, we understand more about dogs – how they learn and how they function – than ever before. However, even though we know all this, we have to suppress our dogs more than ever before, and in spite of the introduction of the Animal Welfare Act with its five welfare needs – one being 'the need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns' – we no longer dare let dogs be dogs.

## WHAT IS AGGRESSION?

Aggression is a complex issue and so perhaps it is wise to define what we mean by aggression before we start looking at what causes it and what we can do to start reforming it.

There are many descriptions and definitions of aggression

but for the purpose of this article, aggression is any vocalisations or gestures with or without intent (known or unknown) that gives you, the owner, cause for concern.

## WHY IS MY DOG AGGRESSIVE?

I don't wish to dwell a great deal on the hows and whys of theory, but it is important that you can understand why a dog is aggressive or has developed aggression problems towards other dogs. Understanding how the aggression is derived, or was learned, is key to unlocking the path to resolution.

There are a great many factors to take into consideration – however, the answer will almost certainly be one of the following:


- Your dog is dominant (quite unlikely, but possible).
- Your dog is fearful (quite likely).
- Your dog 'doesn't get it' with other dogs (even more likely).
- Your dog has been subjected to trauma by another dog (quite likely).

There are, of course, no hard and fast rules as to why your dog behaves the way he does. It works exactly the same with us; we are a product of our upbringing and our childhood, as well as all our experiences thereafter.

Everything we've done, experienced and encountered – both good and bad – makes us what we are.

A dog is not a machine or some kind of inanimate piece of furniture that shares your home – he's a member of a living, thinking, complex species we will never fully understand.





Walking a dog who's constantly on edge, and displays aggression towards dogs he doesn't know, can take all the joy out of dog ownership.

# other dogs"

Pic © Schubbel/Shutterstock.com



## Training & behaviour

Dogs can be aggressive for a number of different factors and a number of combined different factors. For example, a dog can be dominantly aggressive within the home with other family dogs, but be fearfully aggressive with dogs outside of the pack.

Most importantly, you need to remember that there's no innate drive in canine evolution that governs meeting random dogs in the park to play while you loiter around at the park cafe sipping your latte! Dogs do live within and form packs, and it is relatively easy to get even the most aggressive dog to reside in a pack. It's a hierarchical, family-like structure that serves them well. Once packs are established, it is uncommon for outsiders to join that pack unless through birth.

However, in our polite society, we do expect our dogs to gambol amiably down country lanes or play nicely together in the park, and that is something we have to induce through nurture – and we have to do it in a way that suits the type and personality of dog we own.

### BREED-SPECIFIC SOCIALISATION

Ideally, as you're reading this, you've just obtained your seven- to eight-week-old puppy. I suspect that may not be the case but, as I said, you have to have a knowledge of how the aggression arose in order to resolve it.

Socialisation is a term one hears frequently. It is the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, language, social skills, and values to conform to the norms and roles required for integration into a group or community. It's a combination of both self-imposed rules (because the individual wants to conform) and externally-imposed ones, together with the expectations of others – in other words that the individual will adopt the behaviour patterns of the surrounding culture.

The critical period of temperament formation in the dog is from about five to 12 weeks of age. This is the *critical* window of opportunity during which we must introduce a

puppy to all manner of stimuli and experience – not least meeting other dogs for casual engagement.

### SOME DOGS JUST DON'T GET IT

In my experience, the most common reason that dogs are aggressive in the company of other canines is because they just 'don't get it' – they simply do not understand the body and facial language of their own kind, and this is normally due to lack of appropriate socialisation.

I find that the best way to approach the issue is to first stop the action of the aggression and then work on desensitising the dog to others – maybe initially from a distance, and then gradually allowing engagement, under close control, with selected dogs

that you encounter. Stopping the action and bringing the dog under control is the essential first step, although it is the process of engagement with other dogs that will begin to alter the mindset.

Aggression between dogs can be a difficult issue to work with, and with the legal implications of dogs displaying aggressive behaviour in public places, your only real option is to employ a canine behaviour practitioner to advise and assist you in the first instance.

They will go through safety, muzzle use, and canine body language in order that you have the very best chance of reforming your dog's aggression. They will also establish cause or probable causes that will help you understand the issues and your dog's mindset, and will

be able to give you a likely timescale to work within.

In most cases, they will also be able to bring their own trained dogs to the consultation to help in the initial stages. These dogs, who are trained not to react to provocation, will be of great assistance during that all-important first lesson, and help you and your dog to build confidence and move forwards. ●

### About the author



**Ross McCarthy**  
MBIPDT, MCFBA,  
MGODT (MT)  
has a Master's  
degree in canine  
behaviour and

psychology. He's a member of the British Institute of Professional Dog Trainers and the Canine and Feline Behaviour Association. He runs the London Dog Behaviour Company.

Some dogs just don't 'get it' when it comes to canine body language, but with patience and correct training the behaviour can be improved, or at least managed.



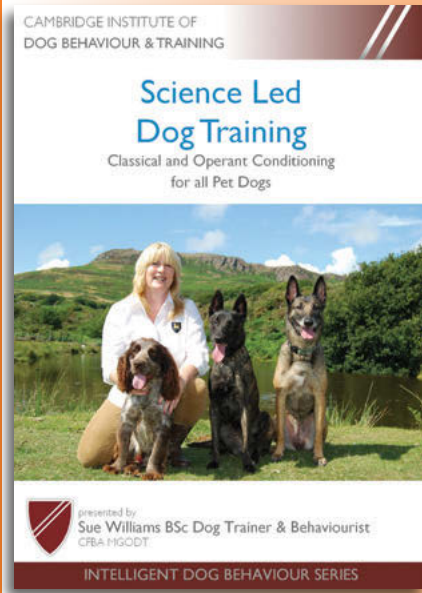
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# All wrapped up...

Stuck for special Christmas present ideas? Then let us help you out with our pick of gorgeous gifts for you and your four-legged friend.



## Designer kennel

The Vimini Designer Dog Kennel brings a stylish new look to the tired old dog house! It's strong, robust and made from lightweight plastic in a clay-effect style. Ideal for smaller breeds of dog, it sits well in the garden or conservatory – and you simply hose it off to clean. From £59 in sizes small, medium or large; [www.advantay-gardenia.co.uk](http://www.advantay-gardenia.co.uk), tel. 01787 314070.



## Snuggly sleeps

This soft, yet robust dog bed is made of lavender herringbone tweed from 100 per cent British wool, with a cosy fleece lining. With firm side walls and a padded cushion (one side fleece, the other wool), it's fully washable and ideal for winter naps. From £95 in six sizes, from mini to giant; [walkwithme.co.uk](http://walkwithme.co.uk), tel. 0115 837 5320.



## Doggy bags

Kiss goodbye to muddy footprints all over the house thanks to the Doggy Bag. Designed to dry and clean your dog in seconds, its highly absorbent material peels off dirt, trapping it inside the bag, which can then be shaken clean and popped in the washing machine. From £49, in five sizes; [www.microfibrestore.co.uk/petcare](http://www.microfibrestore.co.uk/petcare), tel. 0800 028 2799.

## Caught on camera...

Catch your dog's every wag and woof with Motorola's Scout 83 pet monitoring camera. It allows you to check on your dog while you're out of the house – simply download the free Hubble App on your android or Apple smartphone, tablet or PC to remotely operate the camera from anywhere, and 'see' what your dog's up to. It can constantly record your dog's movements and even works in the dark thanks to its infrared night vision mode. From £79.99; [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) or [www.argos.co.uk](http://www.argos.co.uk), as well as independent pet retailers.



## Seasonal walkies

A Christmas morning dog walk calls for some festive accessories, and Ditsy Pet is here to help with its snowman-themed gear. Choose from an elasticated dicky bow, which easily stretches on and off your dog's collar, and a matching collar and lead. From £11.95 (collar, available in sizes XXS to XL), £13.95 (lead, available in sizes XS to L/XL), £5 (dicky bow, available in sizes S or L); [www.ditsypet.co.uk](http://www.ditsypet.co.uk), tel. 0115 958 1154.



## Lasting keepsakes

Heart in Diamond is a truly special way to celebrate that unique bond and friendship that exists between you and your loyal animal companion, by having a real diamond – created from your pet's fur, hair or ashes – set in a design of your choosing. From watches and rings to pendants and earrings. These simply stunning jewellery items are tailored to suit ladies or gentlemen, and are something to treasure for always. From £515; [www.heart-in-diamond.co.uk](http://www.heart-in-diamond.co.uk), tel. 020 7060 6230.



## Tasty bone

DreamBone is a low-fat, highly palatable alternative to rawhide bones, with its vegetable chew outer and a chicken layer inside. From £2.49; available from Asda, Tesco, Morrisons, Amazon or Ocado; [www.dreambone.co.uk](http://www.dreambone.co.uk)



## Boredom beater

Great for keeping your dog entertained throughout the festive season, the Busy Buddy Tug-a-Jug's innovative design allows him to see, smell and hear his treats as they roll around, before being dispensed while he plays. From £8.99 in sizes XS, S and M/L; [intl.petsafe.net/intl/uk](http://intl.petsafe.net/intl/uk), tel. 0800 046 1414.



## Pet fountain

All the best dogs drink from their very own fountain, and the Drinkwell 360 from PetSafe is the ideal luxury gift. It provides a free-flowing stream of water, encouraging your pet to stay hydrated. £75.99; [intl.petsafe.net/intl/uk](http://intl.petsafe.net/intl/uk), tel. 0800 046 1414.



## Easy life!

If a bad back or stiff joints mean you struggle to pick your dog's bowl up from the ground, help is at hand in the shape of the Easybowl. Designed to be easy to pick up and put down, its two-bowl design makes it ideal for food and water. £19.99; [www.easy-bowl.com](http://www.easy-bowl.com) or [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), tel. 0800 043 0826.





## Christmas gift guide

### Bags of style



Dog-lover Elspeth Rose specialises in creating bespoke handbags – simply choose a bag from those she has in stock, or send your own, along with a photo of your dog, and she'll paint him or her onto the bag. Your dog's portrait will last as long as the item it's painted onto. From

£50 custom painted with one dog; [www.barkerandpaws.com](http://www.barkerandpaws.com), email [elspeth@barkerandpaws.com](mailto:elspeth@barkerandpaws.com)

### Doggy duvet

Let your dog burrow under his very own duvet this winter thanks to the warm and cosy Dog's Duvet. A 10.5 tog duvet wrapped in a removable cover (both



of which are machine washable), it's covered in luxurious fake fur. From £28 in three sizes and a range of animal prints; [www.theanimalarm.com](http://www.theanimalarm.com), tel. 01452 702062.

● Turn to page 88 to see our tried & tested report on the Dog's Duvet.

### Classy tableware

Perfect for any dog-lover's dining table, the Muttley Crew range of tableware, designed by Fenella Smith for Dogs



Trust, includes stylish dog bowls, jugs and mugs. Buy something and 25 per cent from the sale goes to the charity. Dog bowl, £28, mugs from £14.50, jugs from £18.50; [www.fenellasmith.com](http://www.fenellasmith.com), tel. 01491 638850.

### Doggy denim

Denim 4 Dogs, as its name suggests, specialises in denim accessories for your canine pal. Its range of collars and leads can be blinged up with coloured sparkly stones or decorated with silver-coloured studs and shapes. From £13.95 for collars and £13.95 for leads; [www.denim4dogs.co.uk](http://www.denim4dogs.co.uk)



### Be seen!

Give your dark evening walks a funky high-viz twist this winter with the range of glow-in-the-dark human and canine clothing from Zhoodz. From £18.75 for a dog jacket, in high-viz yellow and sizes XS to L, or £18.99 for an adult's T-shirt, in a range of sizes, colours and styles; [www.zhoodz.co.uk](http://www.zhoodz.co.uk), tel. 01484 506151.



### Festive treat

Stop your dog piling on the pounds this Christmas by offering him a Parsnip & Cranberry Veggi Dog Treat. Handmade using only the best ingredients, they're free of any 'nasties' and full of essential nutrients, minerals, vitamins and antioxidants. Wheat and gluten-free, other flavours include Beetroot & Apple, Carrot & Ginger and Apple & Cinnamon. £3.99 per pack; [www.veggidog.co.uk](http://www.veggidog.co.uk)



### Lounge in style

The Covo Dog Lounge has a real wow factor. Designed exclusively for MiaCara by architect and interior designer Uta Cossman, it offers a cosy space for your dog to curl up in. £415 in walnut (pictured) or oak with a mocha cushion, one size (75 x 41cm); [www.styletails.com](http://www.styletails.com), tel. 0203 086 7984.



### A dog-lover's read



One man, one dog, one big love... *Waiting For Doggo* by Mark B Mills tells the story of Dan, a single man and reluctant dog owner. However, said dog (called, as you may have guessed, Doggo) is a special kind of four-legged friend, and soon Dan's life changes for ever. Aimed at grown-up dog-lovers, as the language is fairly strong in places, it's the ideal stocking filler. £12.99, published by Headline Review; [www.headline.co.uk](http://www.headline.co.uk), tel. 0207 873 6000.

### Cosy mat

Help keep winter chills at bay with a nifty self-heating Thermal Mat from Scruffs. The mats contain a foam layer backed with reflective foil which reflects body heat back to your pet. A quilted polyester layer lies between the the super-soft fleece cover, providing additional insulation. In black/grey or brown/tan and in five sizes. From £10.99-£24.99; [www.petslovescruffs.com](http://www.petslovescruffs.com), tel. 0161 702 5060.





# Christmas Crackers

Six of the best for Santa's little helpers!



## The Microfibre Store

Doggy Bag dries and cleans a wet, muddy dog in minutes. Not only is the material super-absorbent, but it easily peels off dirt, sand and mud. The bag's design then traps any mess inside, instead of it going all over your car seats or motorhome. Doggy Bag also dries out fast enough to avoid the damp dog smell that regular towels get, which means you can use it all month before even thinking about machine washing it.

1

2

## Vimini Dog Kennel

The Vimini is a unique, stylish and hygienic dog kennel, suitable for the garden, home, and is ideal in a conservatory.

Made in Italy from UV stable recyclable polyethylene, it is lightweight, robust, and has a natural clay appearance. It won't degrade or rot and is maintenance free, so it's the perfect outdoor retreat for your dog – just add a comfy bed. Plus it is very easy to clean, simply hose down with water. Available in Small and Medium sizes.



3

## Ditsy Pet

Ditsy Pet is a delightful brand of dog collars, leads and harnesses. Each individually handcrafted in the UK. We have everything from spots & stripes to pretty florals, so you can be sure your dog is walked in style. All Ditsy Pet collars & leads have an inner webbing core for extra strength and are washable. NEW leather range now available too! We cater for all sizes of dogs in over 40 different designs. Prices from £11.95  
Where to buy: [www.ditsypet.co.uk](http://www.ditsypet.co.uk) or call 0115 9581154



4

## Celebration Pet Diamonds

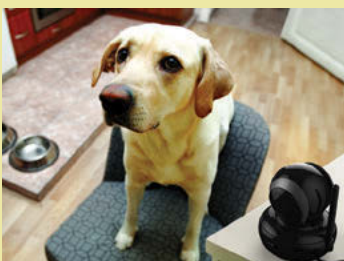
A personal diamond grown from the carbon of a pet – using fur or hair. Heart In Diamond is a unique way to celebrate and treasure that unique friendship and bond that exists between a loyal companion and their owner. Heart In Diamond is a lab created diamond. 100% personalised. These are REAL diamonds with the same chemical, physical and optical properties as natural, mined diamonds. Covered by the manufacturer guarantee with a Certificate of Authenticity. Where to buy: [www.heart-in-diamond.co.uk](http://www.heart-in-diamond.co.uk) or call 020 7060 6230



5

## Motorola

Like a dog with a new toy, Motorola's Scout 83 pet monitoring camera never stops – meaning that every wag, woof, purr and meow is caught in HD so pet owners never miss a thing. Using the Hubble App, owners can check in on their pets, talk to them and operate the camera, giving them piece of mind that their pampered pooches are happy whilst they are out of the home.



6

## Tweed dog sleeping bag

Multifunctional sleeping bag offering cosy comfort for dogs that enjoy burrowing or hiding under blankets. Handmade to order from 100% British wool tweed of your choice, lined with grey or cream sherpa fleece. Small velcro strips allow opening up/closing of the bag according to the dog's preference. Dimensions: 80 cm x 70 cm (fully folded into sleeping bag); 80 cm x 140 cm (unfolded into blanket).  
Where to buy: [www.walkwithme.co.uk](http://www.walkwithme.co.uk)





Health & welfare

# All in the genes



Vet **Graham Finch** explores a few of the inherited conditions most likely to affect your dog.

Inherited diseases affecting the eyes, face and nervous system are many and varied.

Pic © Roland J Idema/Shutterstock.com.



**I**nherited diseases have a direct genetic transmission from one animal to its offspring. However, the genetic make-up of individuals is incredibly complex and some genes are dominant over others, which can result in dogs being carriers for a condition while not actually having the disease as such.

These individuals are perfectly healthy in themselves, but will pass on disease to future generations. These diseases can therefore skip generations and appear relatively infrequently. It is not uncommon, for instance, for us to come across a dog with hip dysplasia who comes from a long line of dogs with low hips scores (these are scores made by looking at X-rays of a dog's hips to assess his or her conformation – the lower the score the better).

This situation is further complicated by the role of the environment in determining to what extent a disease makes an affected individual poorly. This is the nature versus nurture debate. Again, hip dysplasia is a good example here, as the science tells us that feeding a diet with appropriate ratios of different nutrients can reduce the arthritis that is likely to develop later in life due to hip dysplasia. It has also been shown that diet plays a role in switching certain genes on and off – but that's another article...

Here, I'll cover the main diseases that affect the eyes, head, skin and coat, although this is by no means an extensive list; there are literally hundreds!

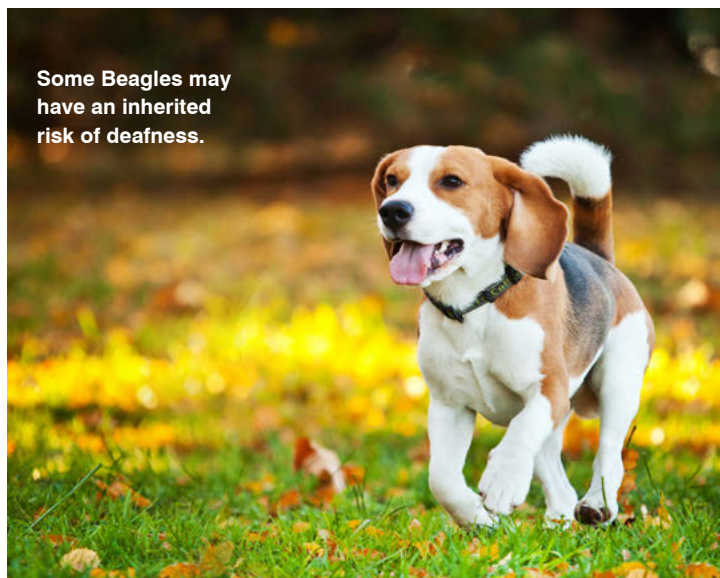
## THE EYES

The eyes are an incredibly complicated structure, and so it's perhaps unsurprising that there are a whole plethora of inherited conditions that can affect them. I've outlined just a few here, but there are many more. Many different breeds can be affected too, and I have just indicated a few of these. It's also worth noting that I often come across people who are concerned about their dogs' eyesight and blindness, and while it's sad for any dog to lose his sight, sight is not a dog's primary sense; scent is. Dogs live in a smelly world and

often cope with blindness with remarkable stoicism.

- **Corneal edema** – this is a clouding of the outer part of the eyeball, known as 'blue eye', and Afghan Hounds are often affected. It occurs secondary to a viral infection or vaccination, and usually resolves within a few weeks.
- **Corneal dystrophy** – likely to affect Airedale Terriers, Boxers and Beagles. This is where the cells in the cornea don't form or renew properly, resulting in corneal ulcers. The condition will usually heal slowly following appropriate treatment.
- **Progressive retinal atrophy** – often affecting Akitas and Australian Cattle Dogs. This leads to loss of night vision, progressing slowly to total blindness for which there's no treatment.
- **Lens luxation** – more common in Australian Cattle Dogs, Border Collies and Chinese Crested Dogs, luxation (eversion) of the lens is accompanied by glaucoma and pain. This can be an emergency and may require specialist attention.
- **Cataracts** – often affecting the Australian Kelpie, Beagles, Bearded Collies, Jack Russell Terriers and Leonbergers. This leads to defective eyesight due to opacity of the lens, and may require specialist treatment.
- **Choroidal hypoplasia** – more common in Australian Shepherd Dogs. This congenital defect affects the choroid, retina and optic nerve. There is no treatment.
- **Microphthalmia** (an abnormally small eye) may be associated with coloboma (a cleft in the structures of the eye).
- **Retinal degeneration** – more usual in Basenji (late onset) and Bernese Mountain Dogs (early onset). This leads to a gradual loss of eyesight and increasing tunnel vision.
- **Glaucoma** – often associated with Basset Hounds and Dandie Dinmonts. An increase in pressure within the eyeball causes pain, which can sometimes be treatable.
- **Entropion** – more usual in Bloodhounds, Shar Peis and Great Danes. This results in a turning-in of the eyelids and is correctable surgically.

Some Beagles may have an inherited risk of deafness.



Pic © Dez/Shutterstock.com

- **Persistent hyperplastic vitreous** – often found in Bouvier des Flandres. This causes opaque lesion of the posterior capsule, resulting from abnormal regression of the hyaloid artery.
- **Collie eye anomaly** is common in Collie breeds, as its name suggests. It's a bilateral congenital eye defect of varying severity, affecting the choroid, retina and optic nerve, and there is no treatment.

## THE HEAD

Inherited conditions that commonly affect the ear, nose and throat include:

- **Brachycephalic airway syndrome** – common in Pugs, Boston Terriers and Affenpinschers. This causes upper airway obstruction, leading to respiratory distress, stridor (noisy breathing), reduced exercise tolerance and, in more severe cases, cyanosis and collapse. There are surgical procedures that will help to correct these abnormalities.
- **Deafness** – this is more usual in Beagles (usually discovered at around four weeks of age) and can affect either one or both ears.
- **Laryngeal paralysis** – found in Bouvier des Flandres, this results in exercise intolerance, respiratory problems, gagging, coughing and loss of voice. Severe cases may require surgical intervention.
- **Cleft palate** is common in Boxers. Without intervention pups who attempt to suckle often aspirate and die, however some puppies do do well with surgery.
- **Cranio-mandibular**

osteopathy – more common in Cairn and West Highland White Terriers, this disorder of the jaw and/or middle ear chamber of young dogs is usually medically treatable, with most dogs making a full recovery.

- **Dermatomyositis** – often found in Rough Collies, this is a severe autoimmune dermatitis of the ears, face, lips, tips of the tail, and over bony prominences of the limbs, with alopecia and masticatory myositis. Sadly, few dogs respond to therapy.

## THE BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM

Inherited conditions that commonly affect this area include:

- **Encephalitis** – usually affecting Chihuahuas, this results in severe depression, ataxia (uncoordinated gait) and generalised seizures.
- **Cerebellar ataxia** – often affecting the Chinese Crested Dog. This results in malformation of the area of the brain that controls movement and balance, resulting in progressive gait abnormalities, tremors and ataxia from three months of age.
- **Narcolepsy** – often found in Dachshunds and Miniature Long Haired Dachshunds, this results in sudden episodes of complete collapse and excessive sleepiness.
- **Epilepsy** – most common in the Border Collie, German Shepherd Dog, Labrador and Jack Russell Terrier, this results in intermittent seizures of variable duration and intensity. It's usually controlled well with medication.



## Health & welfare

● Ivermectin sensitivity – more common in Collie breeds, this is a sensitivity to Ivermectin (and its derivatives), which are drugs used to treat a number of parasitic conditions. Neurotoxic reactions and signs of gastrointestinal tract toxicity and bone marrow suppression can occur, and with modern, less toxic alternatives available I rarely use this drug now.

● Congenital vertebral malformations – these involve the vertebrae and the malformations can cause damage to the spinal cord. Pugs, Bulldogs and Boston Terriers are most commonly affected, and imaging such as CT scanning may be necessary to determine whether a spinal defect can be corrected by surgery.

● Caudal cervical spondylomyelopathy (wobbler syndrome) – this is where the spine in the neck is deformed. Borzois, Basset Hounds, Doberman Pinschers and Great Danes are most commonly affected, and the condition may be inherited with a variable age of onset. Signs range from mild difficulty in walking to paralysis of all four legs. Affected dogs often keep their neck flexed awkwardly, and the neck may be painful. Surgery can relieve pressure on the spinal cord.

● Atlantoaxial subluxation – often affecting young toy or miniature breeds of dogs, this is seen occasionally in large-breed dogs as well. Signs usually develop within the first few years of life, causing neck pain and difficulty moving. Signs can be mild or progress to paralysis of all four legs. Surgery is necessary to stabilise the dog's condition, and the outlook for recovery is uncertain. ●

### About the author



**Graham Finch**  
BVSc, CertVD,  
MRCVS treats  
all kinds of  
ailments in dogs,  
cats and other  
family pets.

He has a particular interest in patients with skin diseases. He is currently owned by a chocolate Labrador, a Cocker Spaniel and a "very scruffy" Border Terrier, plus two cats.

## Case study

# "We've come such a long way"

Dachshund lover **Gill Key** explains how owners, breeders, breed clubs, disease researchers and the Kennel Club are working together to help defeat a serious inherited condition, known as Lafora.

**I** don't show or breed, but I've loved and owned Dachshunds for many years. Unfortunately my first Miniature Wire Haired Dachshund (MWHd), Alfie, succumbed to a condition I eventually discovered was called Lafora – an inherited form of late onset epilepsy.

Lafora, as I now know, causes myoclonus (jerking), full and partial seizures, panic attacks, blindness and dementia. It develops because the dog can't metabolise starch into sugar, and so insoluble starchy platelets build up in the central nervous system, gradually causing it to deteriorate.

Canine Lafora's Disease was first described in 1996 by Sue Fitzmaurice, a veterinary neurologist, but it was another neurologist, Dr Clare Rusbridge who, having diagnosed several cases in related MWHds in the early 2000s, put two and two together when she read up on Dr Berge Minassian's work at the Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, Canada into Human Lafora. This is a rare condition that affects teenagers and is fatal within three to 10 years.

This marked the start of a ground-

breaking collaboration between human and veterinary medicine. The two UK veterinary neurologists collected more DNA samples and pedigree information from a small group of MWHd breeders, which also proved vital in Dr Minassian's painstaking research. However, it wasn't until 2005 that he published his conclusions – he had identified a genetic mutation that was causing the symptoms in the dogs, and for the first time a link between such a mutation and epilepsy was proven.

### VITAL RESEARCH

The Dachshunds' DNA samples proved vital in moving the human research on, and today the Canadian team are looking into a number of promising gene therapies to help ease affected teenagers' symptoms, and, in due course, canine symptoms too. Less positively, the Canadians' offer of further genetic screening of UK MWHd breeding stock was not taken up, and awareness among breeders gradually slipped away.

I knew nothing of all this. All I knew was that Alfie was an important family member

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Only buy from a breeder who health tests for known priority conditions (in Miniature Wire Haired Dachshunds this is Lafora and Cord1 PRA).
- Buy from known, safe litters, ideally from a clear/clear or clear/carrier breeding pair. A clear/untested breeding pair is also acceptable.
- Don't take the breeder's word for it. Ask for the kennel names of the sire and dam and check their status on the Kennel Club's website at <http://tinyurl.com/pe4asrw>
- Make sure you see the mother when you visit, and ask to see copies of pedigree and health test certificates for both dogs.
- If you're thinking of breeding a litter from your own bitch, check the KC health test results to find out whether your dog's dam and sire have been tested. Only if both are tested clear can you be sure your dog is also clear. Get your dog Lafora tested – go to [www.whdc.co.uk](http://www.whdc.co.uk) to find out more.
- If you own a stud dog, only accept matings with tested bitches.



Diagnosed with Lafora, Alfie sadly died in 2012.





## FIND OUT MORE

- The Canine Epilepsy Support Group, call Anne Morley on 01903 784263 or 785327.
- [www.whdc.co.uk/latest-laforas-news.php](http://www.whdc.co.uk/latest-laforas-news.php) – to find out how to get your dog tested.
- [www.laforadogs.org](http://www.laforadogs.org) – for support and advice on coping with an affected dog.
- <http://dachshundbreedcouncil.org.uk> – for more on Dachshunds.
- [www.chelseashope.org](http://www.chelseashope.org) – for more on Human Lafora and research.

**Gill had no idea at first what was making Alfie so poorly.**

and I was horrified when, in early 2005, he started to have regular fits. My vet put them down to idiopathic epilepsy (epilepsy of unknown cause), but gradually Alf started to show an odd head-jerking and a curious stiff walking gait. I stumbled on a short clip of a MWHHD jerking, exactly like Alfie, on Dr Rusbridge's website and the dog was described as having Lafora. I showed the film to my vet and he agreed it was a credible diagnosis.

I was dumbstruck. Here was a description of a serious condition in a dog of the same breed, showing the same symptoms as Alfie – but my vet had never heard of it, and there was no information about the condition easily available to pet owners. How many dogs were suffering from this condition and being misdiagnosed by vets? Was there any treatment? Was anything being done to avoid passing it on?

More research led me to Ian Seath, who had just been appointed chair of the new Dachshund Breed Council, formed by all 19 UK Dachshund breed clubs. He suggested I set up a website ([www.laforadogs.org](http://www.laforadogs.org)) to raise awareness and offer owners advice.

Around the same time, Lesley Patton, who had owned affected dogs and was chair of the Wire Haired Dachshund Club persuaded the club's committee to test a sample population of 100 dogs. It took time and hard work to plan, fund and collect samples, but eventually they were sent off to Dr Minassian's team. In 2010 the results were published. Shockingly, they showed around 10 per cent of dogs tested were Lafora affected, including Alfie. This implied up to 40 per cent might be carriers of the condition, although the only test available then could only identify 'affected' or 'not-affected' dogs; in other

words, it could not distinguish between clear or carrier dogs.

## DNA TESTING

Breed clubs have since gathered sufficient funding (over £30,000) from various sources, including the Kennel Club (KC) Charitable Trust, to fund further research, and in summer 2013 Dr Minassian announced he had developed a full spectrum DNA test that can distinguish between affected, carrier and clear dogs.

Twice a year the Wire Haired Dachshund Club organises bulk testing sessions at a central location where dogs are scanned, bloods taken and samples sent off to Canada for testing. There was also sufficient funding to provide a small subsidy to keep the testing affordable (£150 per test), though this is fast running out.

By the time you read this, approximately 550 MWHHDs will have been tested, of which around 50 will have been tested affected, as well as one Basset Hound. Many of the tested affected dogs are still too young to show any clinical signs, but their owners watch with bated breath.

In March 2014, the KC approved the Canadian Lafora DNA test, and results now appear on the KC's invaluable web-based resources, such as its online health test results finder and mate select resources. All results are posted on [www.whdc.co.uk/lafora-test-results.php](http://www.whdc.co.uk/lafora-test-results.php)

## GROWING AWARENESS

Although the test is now widely known among the showing and breeding community, and increasingly among pet owners, around 50 per cent of MWHHD litters registered by the KC in 2013 were still from 'unsafe' breeding combinations.

One emerging worry is the realisation that a number of carrier dogs have been exported over the years, so there is a strong possibility the condition is already present in breeding stock in Australia, Russia and Canada, to name but a few.

Unfortunately some of those puppies will inherit the Lafora gene from both parents, which means their owners could face years of trauma, huge vet bills, and eventually the inevitable loss of a beloved friend. Just like me. I lost Alfie in summer 2012 when his condition had deteriorated so much that he could no longer enjoy his walks and had severe dementia and panic attacks.

However, we've come so far, and I'm determined to see it through for my 'Laforadogs' poster boy, so I'm still heavily involved, along with many other volunteers.

'I Support Lafora Testing' badges have been seen at championship shows around the country and some breeders now proudly announce the arrival of Lafora safe litters on the web. Facebook and other online forums help hugely, raising awareness of Lafora among the pet buying public.

It's wonderful to be involved in a project that brings together human and canine researchers, breeders, pet owners, breed clubs, breed councils and the KC to spread the message. We've come such a long way in a short time and are beginning to see results, but there's still a long way to go. ●

## About the author



**Gill Key** is one of several volunteer pet advisors to the Dachshund Breed Council Health & Welfare sub-committee, and also works with the WHDC Lafora Testing Group. She lives near Bristol.



# Mailbox



Our pick of the **Dogs Monthly** postbag.  
Email [gill.s@dogsmonthly.co.uk](mailto:gill.s@dogsmonthly.co.uk)

## What makes up Muttly?

We rehomed our wonderful dog Muttly from Many Tears Animal Rescue. When he came to us he was called Bisca, but we called him Muttly because he loves to play, and when he plays he smiles – and he's very cheeky too!

Because he's a rescue dog we have no idea what breed he is. Do any **Dogs Monthly** readers have any suggestions? We thought the dog on pages 50-51 of the July issue looks a bit like him!

Muttly is now two years old. He loves attention, cuddles, playing outdoors and food – lots and lots of food. We think he's unique because he has ginger paws, a little beard, floppy ears and Bambi eyes. He's very hard to say "No" to! **Alys Eaton-Brown, via email**

● If anyone has any thoughts on what breeds might make up Muttly (or if he perhaps looks a bit like your own dog!) please email [gill.s@dogsmonthly.co.uk](mailto:gill.s@dogsmonthly.co.uk) and we'll pass on your messages to Alys.



Star letter!



Mischievous Muttly – what breeds do you think might be in there?!

## Our star letter wins...



...a Tuffies Wipe Clean Dog Bed. Tuffies are strong, waterproof, warm and durable, with a futon-type mattress. Simply hose them down to clean.  
● For more about the range, including the chew-proof Tuffies Dog Bed, tel. 0845 652 6028 or visit [www.tuffies.co.uk](http://www.tuffies.co.uk)

# TUFFIES



## "The photo that stole my heart"

The situation for stray dogs in Bosnia is dire with mass killings on the streets of Sarajevo by 'dog catchers,' mostly untrained yet sanctioned by officialdom. A band of dedicated folk rescue as many strays as possible, get veterinary treatment for them and place them in homes as fosters or in paid-for private kennels, known as pensions.

I became involved when I saw this photo of Lexie (then Alexia) in her pension cage. I prevailed on my wife, saying our other two rescued dogs would welcome her, and Alexia came to us last December. She made the long journey with other dogs from Bosnia to Hungary, then across the Channel via Europet, to a final destination near Chelmsford, Essex.

It was love at first sight.

Brian fell head over heels for Lexie after seeing her in her pension cage in Sarajevo.



She had been one day from death in the public pound until rescuers abducted her one night, together with four other dogs.

These days, she has great games with our other rescue dogs Monty and Jilly, walks on the beach and even had

two holidays this year. She is very happy. I'm still involved in supporting the wonderful work of these saviours of strays such as Dalida Kozlic, a young lawyer who has given up her practice to fight and care for stray dogs.

AWA Bosnia is a volunteer



## Breed survey

The Glen of Imaal Terrier breed clubs – the Glen of Imaal Terrier Enthusiasts and Fanciers Club (EFG) and the Glen of Imaal Terrier Association (GOITA) – are supporting an important breed health survey and would like to encourage all Glen of Imaal Terrier owners to participate.

The Kennel Club has emailed Glen owners on its database whose email addresses are up to date, but this is a relatively small number, so we'd also like **Dogs Monthly** readers to help spread the word.

The survey aims to collect data about the overall health of the breed, including any health conditions that have been diagnosed, cause of death, and reproduction and fertility.

The survey is for Glens born on or after 1 January 2000, and we'd welcome responses from owners of Glens with health conditions to report; Glens who are fit and healthy; old Glens



Glen of Imaal Terriers strike a pose.

and young Glens; pet, show and working Glens, and Glens who've been bred from.

We'd also like to hear about Glens born on or after 1 January 2000 that have since sadly died.

Data from this survey will help to identify any health issues that may need further monitoring or research. The feedback may also influence

future breeding guidelines. All information submitted via this health survey remains strictly confidential, and the final report will not disclose the identity of individual dogs or owners.

If you own a Glen of Imaal Terrier, please complete the survey – or if you know anyone who has a Glen, please do tell them about it!

The Glen Health Survey can be found at [www.efghealth.co.uk/survey14.html](http://www.efghealth.co.uk/survey14.html)

Ideally, we would like to receive completed surveys before the middle of December. For more information, or if you need help completing it, please tel. 01403 269038 or email [efghealth@gmail.com](mailto:efghealth@gmail.com)  
**Alison Seall, via email**

group founded two years ago by Sandra Jensen from Brighton. You can find more information at [www.awabosnia.org](http://www.awabosnia.org) or email [sandra@awabosnia.org](mailto:sandra@awabosnia.org)

If you can spare a few euros to help save, treat and assist with the cost of finding these dogs forever homes, you can donate via Paypal at [donations@awabosnia.org](mailto:donations@awabosnia.org)  
**Brian Lux, via email**



Lexie (right) at home with fellow rescue Jilly, a Patterdale X Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

## Booster jabs experience

I was really interested to read the excellent articles in your October edition – “Does he really need a booster?” by Ruth Downing and “Needling out the facts” by Lissy Siedel.

About 20 years ago, my Yorkshire Terrier started having fits after his first booster at one year old. At that time I did not connect the fits with the vaccination. After his fourth annual booster he collapsed and nearly died. The vet said it was a reaction to the booster vaccination and advised against him having any more. Within two years the fits stopped. He never had another fit after this and lived to a good old age.

A few years ago I read some American research on vaccinations. Following the researchers' findings I now have my dogs vaccinated at eight and 10 weeks, then

at 15 months old, and then every five years, with no boosters annually.

With reference to the comment by vet Graham Finch about the need for annual human flu vaccination: it's my understanding that the human flu virus mutates, thereby becoming immune to the previously used vaccine.

The manufacturers therefore alter the vaccine to make it relevant to the current strain as far as possible, hence the need for annual vaccination in this particular case – different virus, so different antibodies. This does not apply to the viruses that are vaccinated against in dogs.

**Jeannie Hall, Lincolnshire**





# "Boo's my best buddy"

Meet the final contenders for our HiLife Trophy, **Rosie Reid** and **Boo** – and discover how to vote for your favourite to win the HiLife 'Best Friends' Trophy 2014.

**I** was in a very bad place when Boo came into my life. I'd suffered several miscarriages and an ectopic pregnancy, been made redundant, my relationship with my partner ended and I lost my home. I was becoming depressed and consumed by it all; then one day I was told of a friend of a friend who had a litter of pups. Before I knew it I was in the car on my way to see them.

I picked up a little black and white puppy who looked me straight in the eyes before flopping her head onto my chest and snuggling under my chin. In an instant the feeling of loss I'd been suffering disappeared and I was overwhelmed with unconditional love. Of course she came home with me, and I called her Boo.

I still had to face my battles, but now I had my armour in the shape of Boo. She licked away every tear, was by my side every minute of the day, even coming to work with me, and always instinctively knew when I was having a down day. Her answer was to climb onto

my lap and flop her head on my chest. I swear she knows me better than myself!

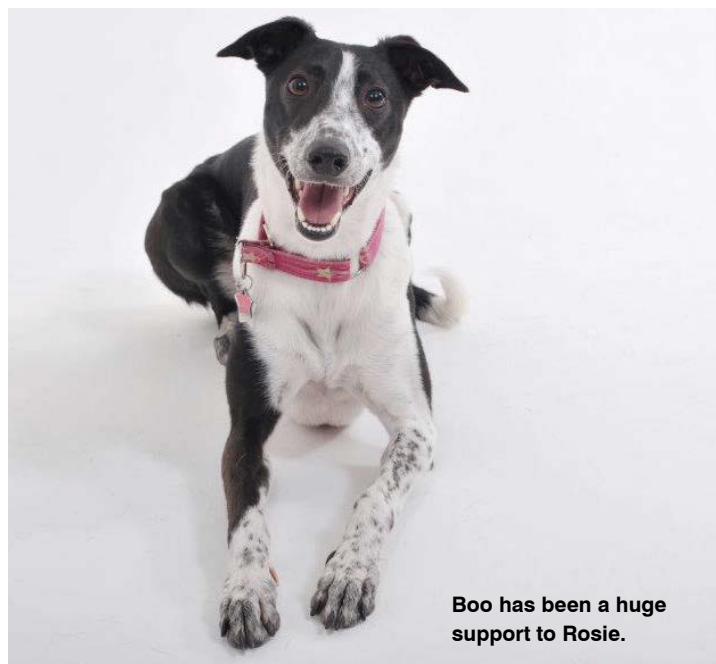
Boo will do anything for me and is the most loyal dog I've ever met. We both suffer separation anxiety if we're apart – I was hospitalised recently and cried because I missed her so much. We've learned to do flyball and agility together, and through Boo I've met new people, got out and about and developed the confidence to battle an eating disorder that's haunted me since childhood.

Finding Boo as a puppy was just what I needed to get my life back on track. My friends talk about their children saying their first words; I talk about how Boo's team came first in flyball, which she absolutely loves. We compete most weekends all over the south of the country, and I find that while I'm doing flyball with her I'm totally focused on it – so I don't have time to think about my troubles! The flyball community is such a huge, friendly one and my team are now all good friends.

Boo has introduced me to the wonderful world of dog charities, too, and I now run fund-raising events. I organise the annual Swindon Great British Greyhound Walk; run safe, enclosed playgroups for sighthounds – I charge an entry fee per dog and all proceeds go to Evesham Greyhound and

Lurcher Rescue (EGLR) – I also foster dogs for EGLR and help run the charity's spring show and online photo competitions. I raise money for Scruples Whippet Rescue and Help for Hounds Rescue too.

Everyone who meets Boo comments on our wonderful relationship. I work with



Boo has been a huge support to Rosie.

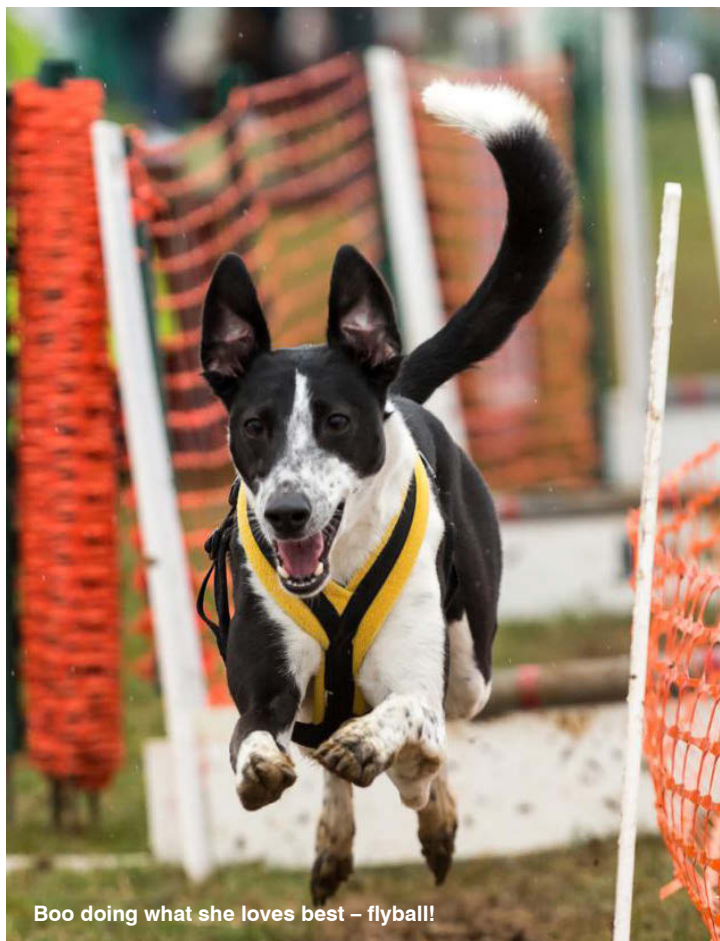


teenagers and they adore her as well. When they're sad or having a tough day they come into my office to pat and fuss Boo, and at Christmas she always gets lots of presents and treats.

I may not be able to have children due to my past health issues, but I have everything I've ever wanted and more in Boo and I would never have got through the past few years without her. I've even met a

wonderful new man, who has the Boo seal of approval – she absolutely adores him. He is disabled and uses a wheelchair and Boo has learned to do tricks with him that adapt to the wheelchair. She does 'on' on the back of his chair so it looks like she's pushing him along.

He used to hate being in front of crowds but ran the raffle stall at the EGLR show recently with Boo by his side. I was so proud! ●



Boo doing what she loves best – flyball!

Pic © Darren Bull/Whiskers Pet Photography

## Pets win prizes!

As this month's nominees, Rosie and Boo win four 1.5kg bags of HiLife FEED ME! Complete Moist Mince.

This range is nutritionally balanced and contains all the goodness of dry foods, but is softer, meatier and tastier. Its popular varieties, 'with Beef flavoured with Cheese & Veg' and 'with Turkey & Chicken flavoured with Bacon & Veg', contain high-quality meat ingredients and no artificial colours or flavours, and the resealable packs allow portion sizes to be adjusted to suit each dog.

Boo will also receive three jars of HiLife Special Care Daily Dental chews. These help reduce tartar build-up, control plaque and maintain strong white teeth, healthy gums and fresher breath.



# The HiLife Trophy Time to cast your vote!



Which one of our 12 contenders will win the HiLife 'Best Friends' Trophy 2014? It's time to choose your favourite partnership...

Over the past year we've featured 12 inspiring stories of readers and their dogs. Here's a round-up of our nominees – all you have to do is decide who's most deserving of our HiLife Trophy and vote via email or post (see below for details). Our overall winner will receive the HiLife 'Best Friends' Trophy, plus a six-month supply of HiLife dog food of their choice, to the value of £300.



### January 2014

Nicola Bowers and her former street dog Roxy, who's battled health problems to become an ambassador for rescue dogs.



### July 2014

Julie Barrett and Henry, who overcame shocking abuse to become a supportive, loving dog.



### February 2014

Emma Ayres and Cory, who has helped Emma fight her demons – while battling his own, too.



### August 2014

Stephanie Adams and trick-loving Parker, who's proven himself a superstar in the showing world.



### March 2014

Sharon Brown and Reba, a Border Collie who's become her family's best friend.



### September 2014

Gerri Hickman and Tilly – the 'untrainable' pup who has grown into a huge support and inspiration.



### April 2014

Jane Neary and her 'one in a million' Chihuahua, Roo.



### October 2014

Robert Stuhldreer and his Akita Flora, who's become a true ambassador for her breed.



### May 2014

Summer Clark and her loyal Border Terrier Earl, who's taught her the real meaning of friendship.



### November 2014

Claire Denyer and her life-changing Labrador Indy, who's helped her overcome serious health issues.



### June 2014

Joanne Harris and her Dalmatian, Dilbert, who's filled her life with laughter and sunshine.



### December 2014

And this month's contender, Rosie Reid and Boo. See left.

To vote for your favourite, email [Kathie.L@abmpublishing.co.uk](mailto:Kathie.L@abmpublishing.co.uk) – putting 'Best Friends' in the subject box – and tell us who you want to win. Alternatively write to Best Friends, Dogs Monthly, 61 Great Whyte, Ramsey, Huntingdon PE26 1HJ. Voting closes on 4 December, 2014 and the winner will be announced in a future issue.



# The inside story



A sudden increase in urination may be a sign of kidney disease, so ask your vet to take a look.

Vet **Alex Allen** of Virbac explains the kidneys' essential role in keeping your dog healthy – and what can happen if they're affected by disease.

**K**idneys are essential organs in your dog's body, found in the abdomen up against the lower spine. They are responsible for several key functions, from water regulation to producing a hormone that stimulates red blood cell production. Their complexity and varied role means damage to the kidneys can become a serious medical condition needing treatment and careful long-term management.

One of the most important functions of the two kidneys is the production of urine, which is how the body regulates the

body's water and salt balance.

Within the kidney various hormones control the absorption and excretion of an assortment of molecules, including sodium and potassium. As dogs have a fairly stable food intake and don't indulge in drugs like alcohol and caffeine, their urine production is usually stable and not too variable.

However, other disease processes may influence thirst and if too much water is drunk then the kidneys will produce more dilute urine, removing the excessive water from the system. This is why vets will often check urine concentration

as it may help diagnose conditions like diabetes and hypothyroidism (an under-active thyroid gland). The urine also provides a perfect route out of the body for any unwanted toxins and by-products of daily life.

## THE ULTIMATE FILTRATION SYSTEM

The filtration system in the kidneys is one of the most intricate and complicated processes in the body. Even after decades of research there are many aspects of the kidney that are still poorly understood.

When blood first enters the kidney it is filtered by thousands of microscopic filtration units called glomeruli. Blood passes through the glomerulus, which is basically a very fine sieve, before

carrying on around the kidney. Blood pressure affects the rate blood enters this structure and may be an important feature of disease treatments.

A key measure of kidney function is termed the glomerular filtration rate, and this will be used to gauge how well the kidneys are filtering the blood. Red blood cells and some proteins are too large to pass through the holes and these essential components of the blood are retained and carry on in the blood vessels.

Some water, glucose and various other salts pass across into the nephron, a thin tube that is formed into a loop and has the blood vessels wrapped around it. As the fluid works its way along the nephron, the body takes back nutrients and important molecules like sodium and glucose. Unwanted waste



products and excess molecules carry on and eventually collect in the core of the kidney. This fluid is now urine and leaves the kidneys via the ureters, entering the bladder.

## KIDNEY DISEASE EXPLAINED

The kidneys can be damaged by various means ranging from medicines and infections to natural ageing processes. Luckily they have a remarkable reserve capacity and don't start to struggle until over two thirds of the nephrons are lost. At this point the kidney is no longer functioning, the animal suffers from renal insufficiency and will require monitoring and lifestyle changes. Once more than three quarters are lost, the animal will go into overt kidney failure and various treatments will be recommended.

Unfortunately, while each nephron has a reserve capacity, once it is damaged the body can't regenerate it or make new ones.

If the insult to the kidneys is sudden and substantial, the kidneys can go from normal function to failure over a short period of time. Severe infections, poisons, sudden

falls in blood pressure and some medications can trigger acute kidney disease, and if the kidneys can't regulate the sodium and potassium levels the body becomes intoxicated with molecules like potassium. This is potentially a life-threatening emergency as other organs in the body, like the heart, will soon start to fail.

Animals suffering from acute kidney disease will quickly become depressed and very ill so need urgent veterinary attention. Urine production often stops and this is an important sign to note. Treatment centres on preserving the remaining kidney and trying to restart the urine production, while prognosis depends heavily on how quickly medical treatments are started and how advanced the damage has progressed when treatments are instigated.

In chronic kidney damage, as the name suggests, this is where the kidneys deteriorate over much longer periods of time and is the most common form of kidney disease affecting cats and dogs.

It has been estimated that about seven per cent of old dogs have chronic kidney

disease (CKD) and concurrent diseases increase the risk.

As the kidney can cope with a loss of up to 66 per cent, the animal is not obviously ill during the earlier stages of the disease and maybe diagnosed incidentally when a blood test is run for another reason. Only with hindsight do symptoms like increased thirst or weight loss become evident.

As the kidneys lose more than two thirds of the functional tissue the remaining nephrons have to increase their rate of filtration. This extra work that each nephron has to do will eventually cause more damage and a vicious cycle of prolonged destruction starts. As the nephrons begin to fail they become more inefficient at retaining water and proteins and removing waste products. During this period the animal will drink more and dilute urine will be produced. Owners often notice the animals needing to go out more frequently to pass increasing volumes of urine that is pale and watery in nature.

Usually, over several weeks to months, the kidneys struggle on with the toxins accumulating and making the animal feel unwell and even nauseous.

Proteins and water are lost more easily leading to muscle wastage and dehydration. Maintaining hydration can be quite hard and once dehydration sets in, this sadly accelerates the animal's decline.

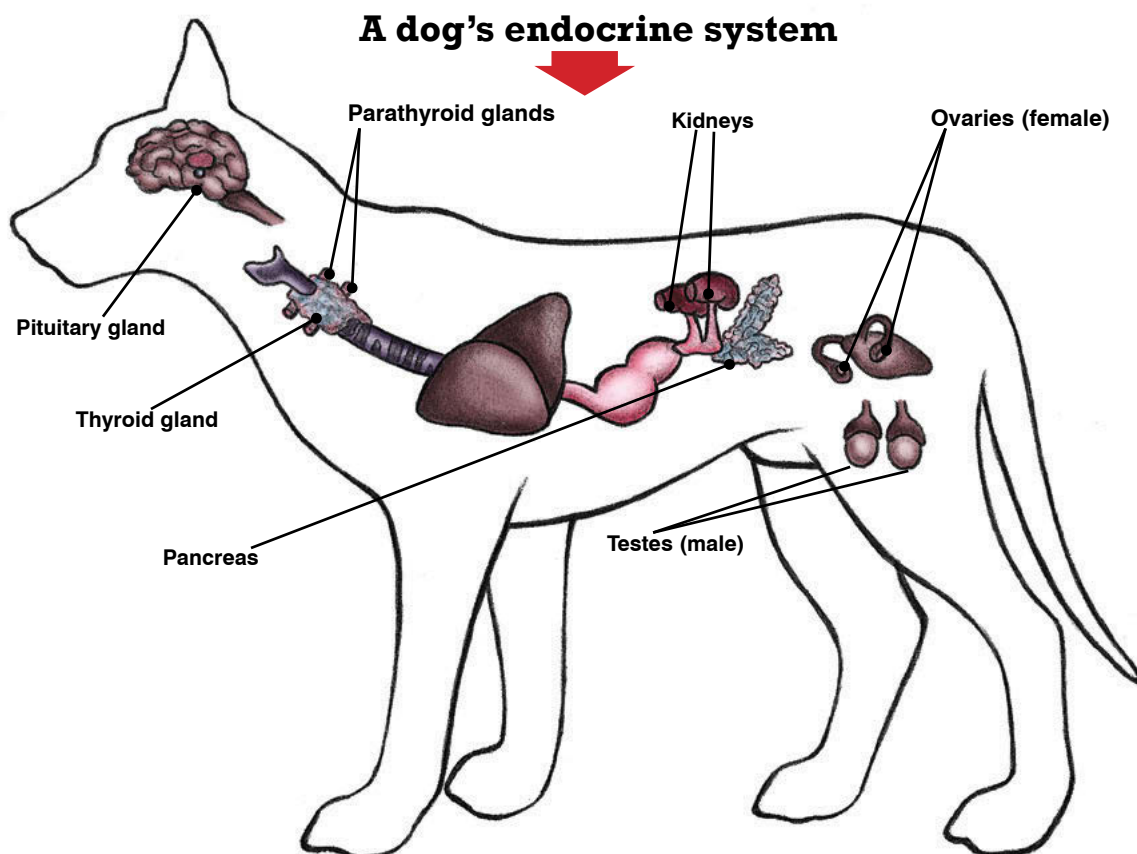
Towards the end, the accumulation of these toxins can lead to mouth and stomach ulcers making the animals reluctant to eat and drink.

## THE TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR CKD

With CKD the principle aim of therapy is to preserve the remaining kidney nephrons and help them function as efficiently as possible to slow down the disease progression.

The treating veterinary surgeon has a choice of a few medications, depending on what underlying conditions may be present, and controlling blood pressure can help the kidney. Blood tests run by the veterinary surgeon are often used to gauge the stage of kidney disease and look for toxins building up in the blood. Urine tests will also provide additional information that will help form a treatment plan.

Toxin accumulation is one of ➤





## Health & welfare

the most detrimental features of CKD and by feeding a specially formulated diet the toxin levels are minimised. These 'kidney' diets have carefully calculated levels of protein to avoid excessive waste produced products when the body metabolises excess protein.

Another key nutrient that has been found to be damaging to kidneys is phosphate. By reducing the ingested levels of phosphate the rate of kidney loss is slowed. A complication of CKD is that the body cannot excrete phosphate as well into the urine so, over time, the blood levels increase and damage the kidneys further.

Diets designed for senior pets have lowered phosphate levels, and veterinary diets developed for CKD will have even greater phosphate reductions. However, even then, some animal's

phosphate levels in the blood remain too high and additional measures have to be taken.

Recently, a group of internal medicine specialists from the International Renal Interest Society (IRIS) produced guidelines on how to manage CKD and phosphate levels.

These guidelines have become the global standard for kidney disease diagnosis, staging and treatment suggestions. IRIS also recommends another approach to further lower the phosphate absorbed in the food by using 'intestinal phosphate binders' added to the animal's daily food rations.

The binders work on a simple principle of trapping the phosphate in the intestine before it is absorbed so that it passes out in the faeces. Several phosphate binders are used but they tend not to be very palatable. In animals

already suffering from a loss of appetite, getting them to eat special diets with phosphate binders can be a challenge.

A new phosphate binder launched this year by Virbac, called Pronefra, tackles the taste issue with its unique chicken and fish oil formulation.

Feedback from both vets and owners has been very positive, with excellent palatability results in initial studies. Pronefra also contains three other ingredients designed to help maintain normal kidney function. To aid in the toxin management there is Chitosan, which binds to various toxins in the intestines trapping them in the faeces to be voided out.

A plant extract from *Astragalus membranaceus* helps maintain renal architecture and marine oligopeptides are natural vasoactive molecules

used by the body to maintain a balanced blood pressure.

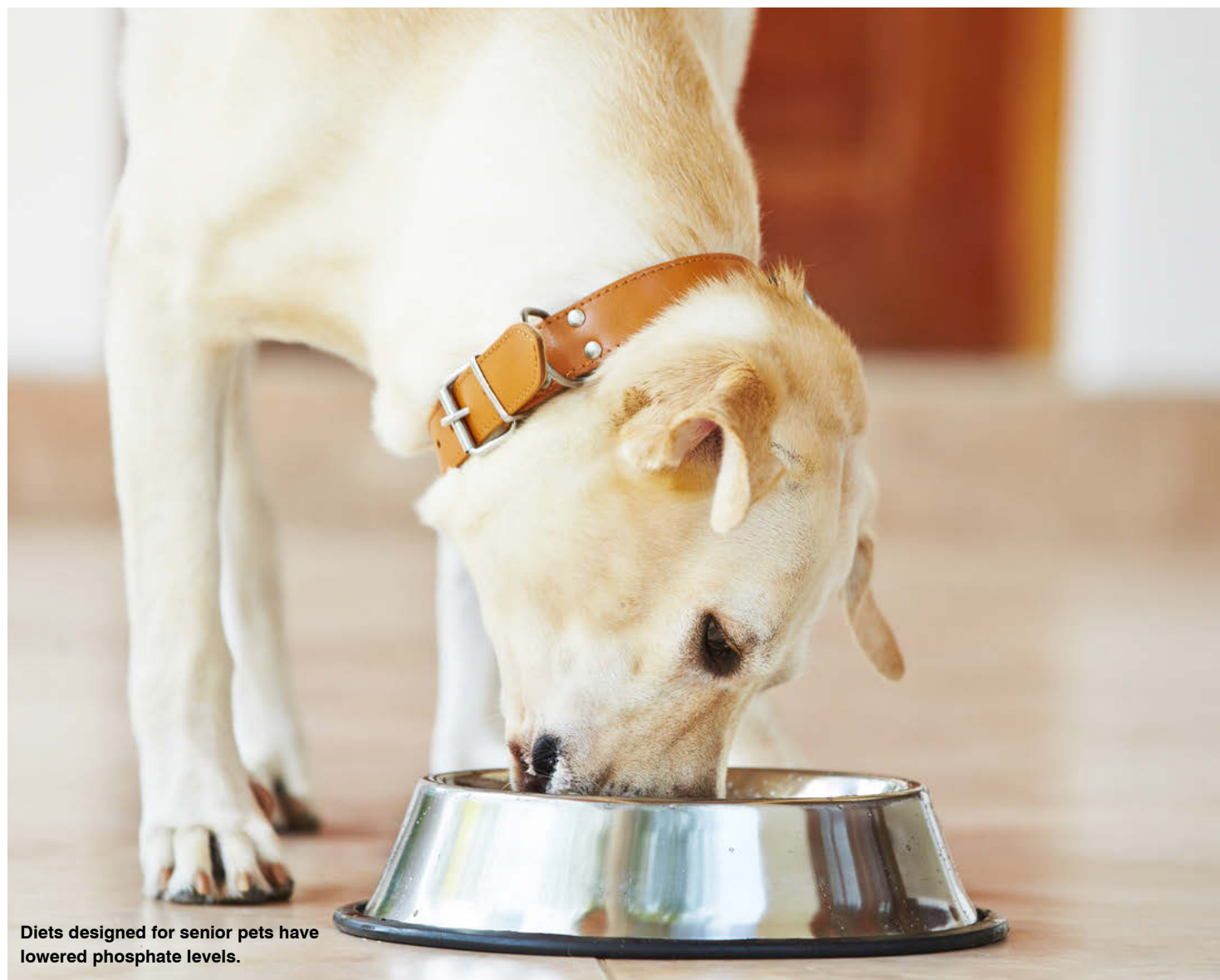
If you suspect that your dog has any kidneys problems, or if you notice signs like an increase in thirst then ask your vet to run some tests to check the kidney function. Therapies can slow down CKD and improve the quality of life. ●

### About the author



Vet **Alex Allen** qualified from the University of Edinburgh in 1998 before working in small animal practice for five years. He then

worked for an X-ray company before returning to clinical practice. In 2007, he joined Virbac, where he is now technical services manager for companion animals, advising practices on using Virbac products and training its sales team.



Diets designed for senior pets have lowered phosphate levels.



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True life tale

# “Greyhounds changed my life”

Susan McKeon went from cat fancier to dog devotee – and found herself with a whole new career to boot.

**Julie Hill** tells her story.

**“I**’d always had cats, and never envisaged that I’d live with a dog, let alone work with dogs,” says Susan McKeon, whose life changed course after she became smitten by a Greyhound in need.

Susan had been bitten by a dog as a child and had since steered clear of them. However, she cherished her cats, one of whom, Chivers, was rather doglike. “He would follow me to a friend’s house, sit on the patio looking through the windows while I spent the evening at my friend’s, then quite happily trot home by my side.”

## WHEN MINA MOVED IN

It was the cats that brought dogs into Susan’s life. In 2005, when she was dropping them off at a cattery, she spotted a notice about Mina, a Greyhound whose owner wanted to rehome her. Fortunately, Mina already lived with cats, and after a visit to check that Susan’s cats weren’t upset by a dog in their environment, Mina moved to her new home.

Susan adored Mina, but it turned out the Greyhound had quite a few issues. “Probably the biggest one was her reactivity towards other dogs, which wasn’t favourable to say the least. Living with a reactive dog can be difficult, and you don’t realise what it’s like until you’ve actually done it.”

Things came to a head when Mina had an altercation with another dog. At a vet check-up it was discovered that Mina’s bone density was poor, and a number of discs appeared to have disintegrated in her spine, which could have been causing pain. Susan consulted what was then termed a dog psychologist. “I had a couple of consultations looking at why Mina would react in certain ways, and it began to spark my interest in dog behaviour.”

## NEW DIRECTION

When Susan relocated to Lincolnshire, she discovered the Lincolnshire Greyhound Trust. It transpired Mina got on well with others of her breed, so Stevie joined the family in 2008, followed by Jasper the following year.

## Find out more

● Happy Hounds Training – [www.happyhoundstraining.co.uk](http://www.happyhoundstraining.co.uk)

● Retired Greyhound Trust – [www.retiredgreyhounds.co.uk](http://www.retiredgreyhounds.co.uk)

Mina loved to play and really seemed to smile.



Early training days for Susan and Stevie.



Jasper and Mina playing chase.

Susan's growing Greyhound gang fuelled her desire to understand her dogs, and she started seeking out reputable trainers on social media and asking them about training and other dog-related courses.

The momentum to take things further came in 2010. Says Susan: "I was made redundant from my marketing post at an airline and (again, social media played a role...) saw a tweet about a temporary job in the press department at the Kennel Club. It was fabulous because I was able to use my marketing and PR skills and marry them with my love of dogs."

At the Kennel Club, she learned about Gwen Bailey's Puppy School. "This is a national network of tutors who've all been interviewed by Gwen or her regional managers. You go through quite a rigorous assessment procedure, several residential courses and weekends, and a correspondence course before you're accepted as a Puppy School tutor."

As well as starting classes as Puppy School North Lincolnshire, Susan also enrolled in a part-time distance-learning degree in canine behaviour and training. It was a huge commitment but Susan learned that she loves working with dogs and people.

Her approach as a trainer is admirable. "My philosophy is first, do no harm – that's my overriding philosophy. I'm a member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and the Pet Professional Guild,

and both use force-free and reward-based training methods."

She also believes that every dog is an individual, and bases her methods in science, always looking at the underlying cause of a behaviour – why does a dog do a certain thing?

## MISCONCEPTIONS

Susan is particularly passionate about busting Greyhound myths, such as the common misapprehension that Greyhounds wear muzzles because they're aggressive.

Says Susan: "Look to science; science is the best thing we know at this point in time, and studies repeatedly show that Greyhounds are one of the least aggressive breeds. Generally, the reason they wear muzzles is that they're used to wearing them when they're racing: when they're running at full pace, their mouths are open and if their teeth caught another dog – not in an aggressive way – they're so thin skinned, it can tear."

She emphasises that using a muzzle can be part of responsible ownership, which brings up myth number two, that Greyhounds can't live with cats or other small mammals.

Says Susan: "That's not necessarily true, as my own Greyhounds and countless others have proved. Every Greyhound is an individual – some can live really happily with cats and other small furries. I know plenty that have been placed in homes with cats, chickens, rabbits or chinchillas.

Some are very laid back."

Some individuals do have a high prey drive, however, so if you bring a Greyhound into a household with small dogs, cats or other animals, for safety's sake it's essential to use a muzzle – both in the house and out walking – until you're certain of the dog's temperament.

Another enduring myth is that Greyhounds need to be walked for hours each day. "Generally Greyhounds are built for speed not stamina," says Susan. "Most are happy with two 20-minute walks a day, which means they're often suited to homes where the owners may not have time for long walks. That said, they can walk for longer, but you need to build up their stamina."

There are also misconceptions that Greyhounds can't recall, shouldn't be let off the lead, and are picky eaters, but one myth in particular infuriates Susan, "Probably the biggest one, the one I really want to disprove, is that you can't train a Greyhound to do anything other than run. That most certainly isn't true!" She recalls proudly that not only would

Mina recall and retrieve, she participated in agility.

## CANINE CONVERT

Mina passed away in February 2014 and now Susan is giving Greyhound puppy Ava the best start in life possible. With Ava, she's hoping to avoid the issues her other dogs suffered from, although she is grateful for what each has taught her, saying, "My life would have been very different if my first dog had been an easy dog."

Susan is fast becoming a Greyhound expert. She's approached by Greyhound owners across the UK on behaviour issues and this year sat on the veterinary and behaviour panel at the Retired Greyhound Trust conference. She's also led workshops on how pet dogs can benefit from participating in scent work.

Though she still loves her cats, the future is definitely doggy for Susan. "I'm a canine convert. I love all breeds of dogs, don't get me wrong, but Greyhounds have a special place in my heart and I can't imagine life without one." ●

## About the author



**Julie Hill** is host of DogCast Radio and lives with her much-loved dogs in rural Shropshire.

Tortoiseshell Tula and Jasper are the best of friends.





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STAR  
PICTURE



Sand? What sand?

Lana, a Bullmastiff  
X Dogue De Bordeaux,  
enjoys the beach.  
Kelly Hill, Norfolk







## Just chilling

Ruby the gorgeous Jack Russell puppy relaxes in her favourite spot.  
**Stephanie Fawell, Co Durham**



## A Beagle bundle

This five-week-old litter of Beagle pups manage to stay still, and quiet, for a rare moment.  
**Helen Brunton, Essex**

## Mine's a pint!

Django, a handsome 11-month-old German Shepherd Dog, waits for his drink to arrive.  
**Kath Wright, West Sussex**



## Is Santa here yet?

Misty, a Scottish Terrier cross, prepares for her first Christmas.  
**Michael Woods, Berkshire**



## Can we go out now?

Five-month-old Working Cocker Spaniel Skipper gets wrapped up ready for winter.  
**Sarah Wyn-Jones, London**





# The write

Love dogs & love reading? **Caroline Davis** checks out Dogs Monthly's pick of must-have books to put on your Christmas list...

## Editor's choice

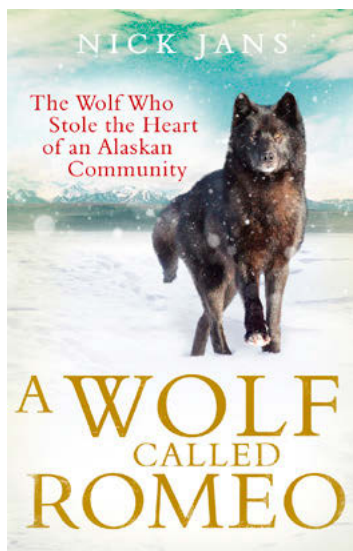
### IMMENSELY MOVING

If you only get to read one book in a lifetime, then *A Wolf Called Romeo* must be it. I'm not ashamed to say that I was blubbing like a baby halfway through the prologue – and I was only one and half pages in! Not least for the amazingly wonderful photograph of Romeo's first meeting with the author's Labrador bitch.

It is a truly magical true story of the bond between a magnificent black wolf called, you guessed it, Romeo, and the people of Juneau in Alaska, told by the man – Nick Jans – who witnessed it all.

Inevitably, there is heartbreak, so be warned. But you'll be so very glad you read it because this remarkable tale will stay in your heart and mind for a long time to come.

Visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eEKGzs4MzE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eEKGzs4MzE) for a glimpse of the remarkable creature that was Romeo. ● £7.99. Published by Ebury Publishing. ISBN: 9 780 75354 088 6.



## Best educational

### GROOMED TO PERFECTION

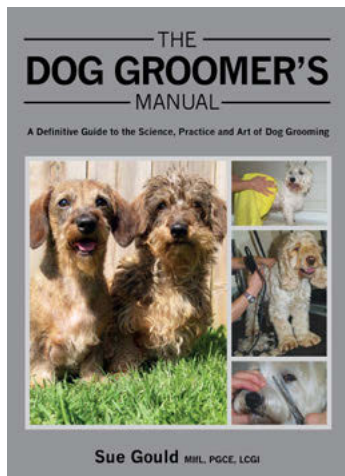
There are few really good books about grooming dogs – but *The Dog Groomer's Manual* is the latest and best so far, with the price – a hefty £45 but it's money well spent – reflecting that.

A member of the Guild of Master Groomers, author Sue Gould brings her wealth of dog grooming experience to the pages of this fabulous book, and it's one no grooming student should be without. It's also a boon for those who groom their own dogs, especially those who also show.

It covers absolutely every topic from the science and practice to the undeniable art of good grooming with plenty

of illustrations to back up the excellent advice contained within the book's 400 pages. Highly recommended.

● £45. Published by The Crowood Press. ISBN: 9 781 84797 590 4.



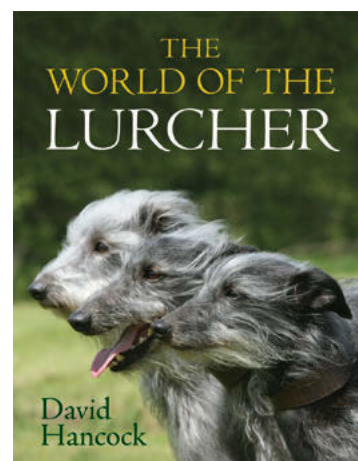
### ALTOGETHER FASCINATING

Thought-provoking, informative and educational – that's my summing-up of Colonel David Hancock's magnificent *The World of the Lurcher*.

Crammed full of beautiful and rarely seen pictures, the author covers the origins and history of the lurcher, along with its uses both at home and abroad.

Genetics and hybrids are also detailed, which is interesting for those keen to learn more about the breeding of these amazing dogs.

It's also useful for those breeding other breeds too to see how the use of different types and bloodlines can be



combined to produce animals for health, soundness and performance, not just looks.

● £25. Published by Quiller. ISBN: 9 781 84689 078 9.

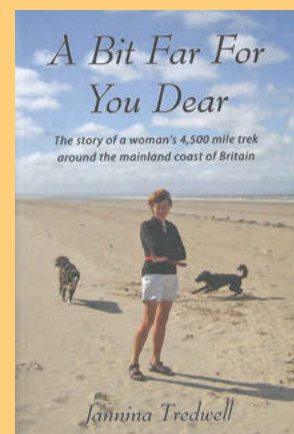
### INSPIRING

After a glass or two of wine over dinner with friends, walking around the entire coastline of Britain with her two dogs seemed like a good idea to the aptly-named Jannina Tredwell.

Most of us would think better of self-torture in the cold light of day the next morning, but 55-year-old Jannina not only set about planning the 4,500-mile trip – she actually did it.

The epic trek took her 10 and a half months through the best – and worst – that Britain's weather could throw at her, but she enjoyed every minute (well, almost), met some remarkable people along the way and raised £33,000 for deserving charities in the process.

*A Bit Far For You Dear* chronicles her trials and tribulations from start to finish and is written with gritty honesty and humour. Once you pick it up you find it hard



to put down – and it certainly gets you itching to plan a big adventure too.

I can hardly wait for Jannina's next book, detailing her epic walk around Ireland, which is due to hit the shelves next year – it's bound to be another cracker.

● £5.99. Published by Jannina Tredwell. ISBN: 9 780 95646 080 6. To order, email [birdonthewire1@btinternet.com](mailto:birdonthewire1@btinternet.com), tel. 01225 466001 or search on eBay or Amazon.



# stuff

## Buy it now!

### GOLDEN YEARS

*Old Dog* is a thoroughly good and well-written book that will make you think, laugh, cry and marvel at the wonderful creatures dogs are. Author Barney Bardsley looks back at the eventful years her family shared with their rescue dog, Muffin, and celebrates the unconditional bond that developed between them all.

Through good times and bad, Muffin remained the one constant that helped keep the family together, providing joy and laughter in the face of adversity. This is a heart-warming memoir that will

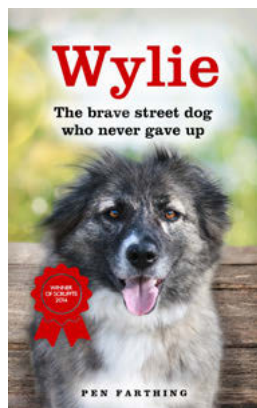
strike a chord with anyone who has ever loved, and been loved by, a pet. Just lovely. ● £7.99. Published by Simon & Schuster UK. ISBN: 9 781 47110 128 1



### INDOMITABLE SPIRIT

*Wylie: The brave street dog who never gave up* is the story of a stray who suffered horrific abuse at the hands of locals in his home city of Kandahar, Afghanistan, yet incredibly didn't lose his kind nature and capacity to love people. Rescued by former Royal Marine Pen Farthing, the book's author, this little canine hero's tale is truly astonishing. And, best of all, there's a happy ending!

● £14.99. Published by Hodder & Stoughton. ISBN: 9 781 44479 958 3.



### SPELLBINDING

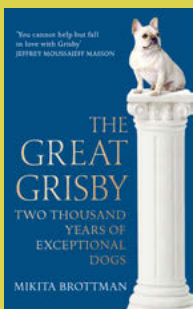
*The Great Grisby: Two Thousand Years of Exceptional Dogs* is a decidedly strange book, but one which I found oddly readable. Can't quite put my finger on why exactly, but basically the author,

Oxford scholar Mikita Brottman, weaves a fascinating insight into the special bond between dogs and humans.

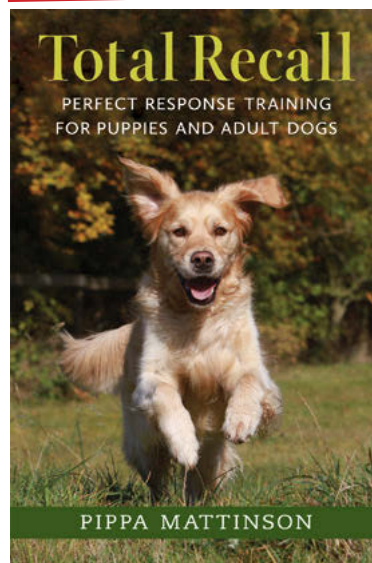
She does this by looking at the relationships between literary characters as well as real ones, but the most interesting element is that the pairings are on lesser-known characters, both human and canine, in history, art, folklore and philosophy.

Mikita explores the relationship between her and her dog Grisby, drawing parallels between their bond and those of dozens of dog owners through history. Quirky – but so enjoyable.

● £16.99. Published by William Collins. ISBN: 9 780 00754 805 7.



## Recommended



### ROVER'S RETURN

Problems getting your dog back when you call him? Then you need a copy of gundog trainer Pippa Mattinson's excellent guide *Total Recall*.

Easy to follow and packed with top tips and step-by-step exercises, if your dog won't recall after you've followed the advice in this excellent guide, then I'll eat my Flexi-lead.

Vital instruction on preparing for recall, training recall, and solving problems – check it out, put it into practice and get the results you want.

● £16.95. Published by Quiller. ISBN: 9 781 84689 149 6.

## A must read

### IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO... A DOG GROOMER

*Tales from a Dog Groomer* is, in a nutshell, a brilliant read – both hugely entertaining and educational for pet owners. As such, it's a great shame that a mainstream publisher hasn't snapped it up, but thankfully the author has published it herself as an e-book.

The book is packed with compelling true-life tales as Debbie Warnes weaves a fascinating account of some of the dogs, other animals and their colourful owners

that she's met in her career as a dog groomer. It really is a glorious insight into what really happens behind the scenes at a grooming parlour.

Prepare to laugh, cry, be appalled at some people's attitude to their pets, and understand better that grooming is not just a job, it's a vocation.

And, as I now realise, that good groomers only charge a fraction of their real worth! ● Published by Debbie Warnes. In e-book form only, it's available to download from Amazon at a bargain price of £4.99. Get it!





## Highly recommended

### TOP TRAVEL GUIDE

As a travel guide for dogs and their humans, *Phileas Dogg's Guide to Dog-friendly Holidays in Britain* is, in a word, BRILLIANT! It's a must-have for all owners who like to travel with their dogs.

It's well-researched (natch, it's written by **Dogs Monthly** contributor Jane Common) and provides lots of really interesting (and often laugh out loud) info about places to visit and stay with dogs – all tried and tested by Jane,

her Battersea mongrel Attlee and their chums.

With over 300 doggy destinations from the Shetland Isles to Cornwall, there's bound to be the pawfect (sorry, couldn't resist) place for you and your four-legged friend to check-in and check-out, from where to get a good sausage to handy locations for a late-night pee.

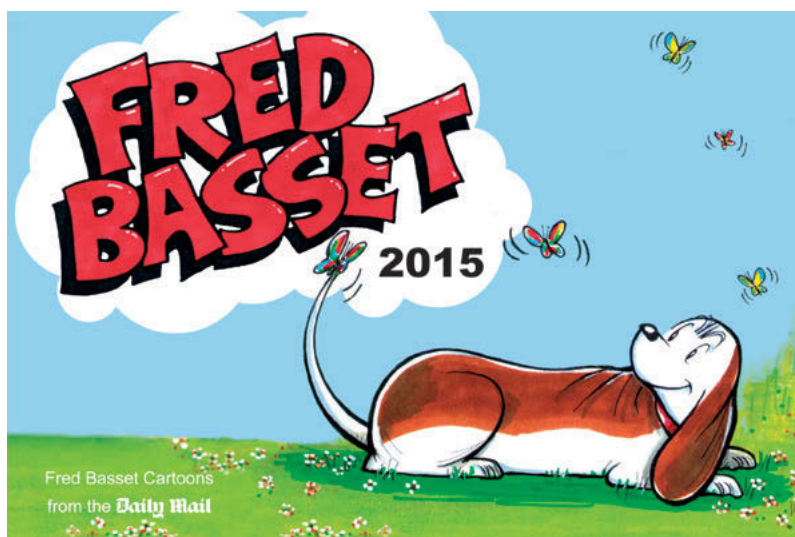
● £12.99. Published by Constable & Robinson Ltd. ISBN: 9 781 47211 260 6.



### FRED'S BACK!

More canine capers in the 2015 Yearbook of the *Daily Mail's* Fred Basset cartoons by Michael Martin. What can I say, Fred's a national treasure and this collection of quintessentially English and gently amusing drawings will be gratefully received by Fred fans worldwide. A fab stocking filler.

● £7.99. Published by Summersdale. ISBN: 9 781 84953 639 4.



### FAITHFUL FRIEND

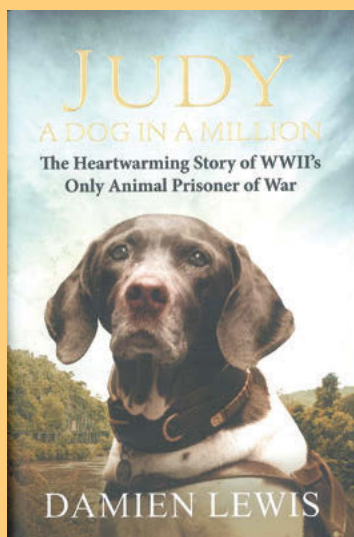
*Judy: A dog in a million* tells the extraordinary story of an English Pointer who became World War II's only canine Japanese prisoner of war (POW).

Judy was the official mascot on HMS *Grasshopper*, a gunboat sunk by Japanese warplanes. She and other survivors were incarcerated in one of Indonesia's

hellish POW camps, with the men put to work on the infamous Sumatran railway. Judy helped protect them

and provided welcome solace in that savage environment. For her courage, she was awarded the PDSA Dickin Medal (the Victoria Cross for animals).

● £18.99. Published by Quercus Editions Ltd. ISBN: 9 781 84866 536 1.



## Buy it!

### RARE INSIGHT

Dog behaviourists come across all sorts of situations involving people and their pets, and Christine Emerson has been involved in many, from downright funny to breathtakingly dangerous. In writing about her experiences, she opens the eyes of dog owners as to why dogs do some of the things they do.

Not only does her book, *Making a Difference*, provide an insight into the multi-faceted work of a canine behaviourist/counsellor, it also gives precious nuggets of valuable advice on how people can help improve their relationship with their dogs and mould them into good canine citizens.

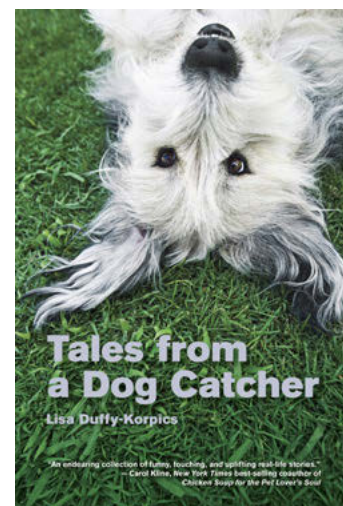
### CAPTIVATING

*Tales from a Dog Catcher*, by Lisa Duffy-Korpics, isn't a new release, being first published in 2009, but it stands the test of time, and I urge anyone who hasn't read it to do so.

Based on the true-life cases of an animal control officer in a Hudson River town in America, this book is touching, funny and heart-rending in turns. It had me captivated – and laughing and crying in equal amounts – from start to finish, so Tesco's tissue sales must have gone up significantly by the time I finished it.

I can't wait for the planned sequel – due out sometime soon, I hope.

● £9.93 from Amazon. Published by The Lyons Press. ISBN: 9 781 59921 498 6.



## Making a Difference

A Slice of Life for a Dog Behaviourist



● £7, or £4.70 for the Kindle version. Published by Christine Emerson. ISBN: 9 781 50012 027 6.



## Inside animal minds

### POSITIVE & UPLIFTING

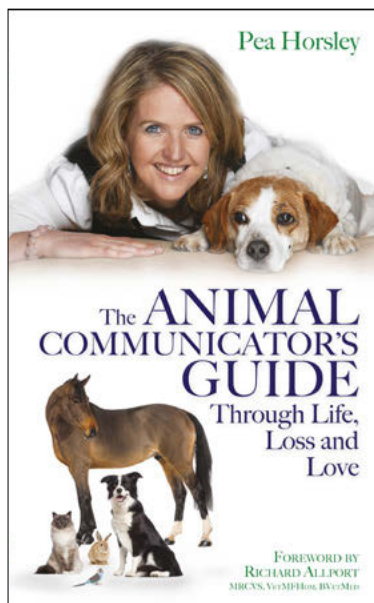
When pets die, their loss is keenly felt and mourned by those who loved them. In her deeply moving book, *The Animal Communicator's Guide: Through Life, Loss and Love*, animal communicator Pea Horsley shares groundbreaking information based on her case studies that reveal animals' thoughts and feelings on life, death and life after death.

I was curious, and a tad doubtful, when I picked up this book – life after death, really? – but I started reading it... and could not put it down. It's not an easy

read by any means, because of the subject, so be warned. All I would say is that you should read it yourself and make up your own minds, but I think a lot of animal lovers out there who are greatly attached to their pets will appreciate this book as much as I came to.

The fact that respected vet Richard Allport has written the foreword and recommends Pea's book to other vets should go a long way to allay any scepticism.

● £10.99. Published by Hay House. ISBN: 9 781 78180 334 9.



### STREET LIFE

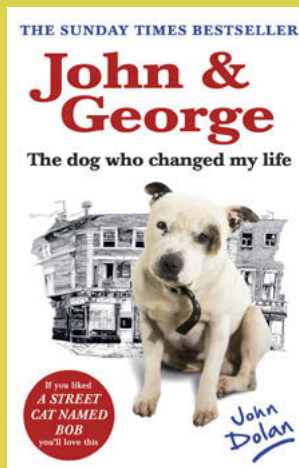
*John & George* is Londoner John Dolan's autobiography. Art lovers among you will recognise him as the former homeless-person-turned-street-sketcher-turned-critically acclaimed artist whose work sells for thousands of pounds these days.

John's honest – and often gritty – account of his life, which involves hard drugs, jail and burglary, revolves around his dog,

George – a Staffordshire Bull Terrier offered to a friend for a can of strong lager – whom he credits for his remarkable change in circumstances.

There's some very strong language throughout the story, but this is a compelling read from someone who has experienced both the worst and best life has to offer.

● £7.99. Published by Arrow Books. ISBN: 9 780 09959 462 8.

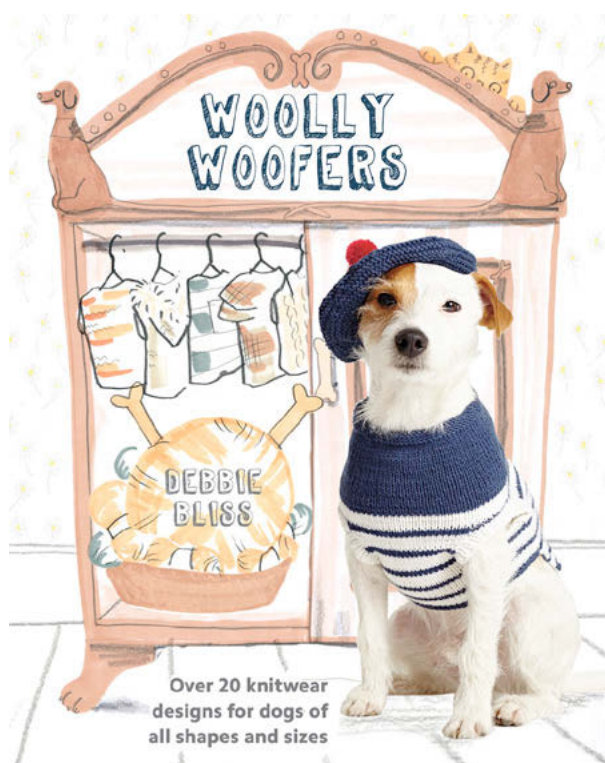


### COSY CLOBBER

If you like knitting, and you like making things for your dog, then *Woolly Woofers* by Debbie Bliss will be right up your street. Inside is a collection of over 20 knitwear designs for dogs – billed as a mixture of cosy, cute and comic.

Now I can't knit for toffee (and have no intention of learning), and I'm not a fan of dressing up dogs either, but perusing the patterns left me thinking 'Hmm, now my wee Bella would look quite cute in that Puppy Polo, and it would keep her tiny old bones warm this winter – and daughter knits... actually likes knitting... she can knit it. Job done!'

● £14.99. Published by Quadrille Publishing. ISBN: 9 781 84949 381 9.



### TWO HEROES

Stories abound of extraordinary relationships between humans and dogs, each special in its unique way. But this one, between Czech airman Robert Bozdech and the German Shepherd Dog he rescued is simply astounding.

In 1940, Robert was shot down by the German Luftwaffe over France. Finding refuge in an abandoned farmhouse, he found a puppy that had been left behind during the owners' escape from no-man's land. The rest of the story is Robert's gripping account of how he managed to find his way to Britain and join the RAF with Ant, the puppy, always by his side – including flying missions with Bomber Command.

After WWII, Ant was awarded the PDSA Dickin Medal for his outstanding bravery and Robert was granted British nationality.

*War Dog*, as told by Damien Lewis, is a fitting tribute to both the man and his faithful friend.

● £7.99. Published by Sphere. ISBN: 9 780 75155 229 4.





# Discovery Coast, Essex

Our guide to enjoying the great outdoors with your dog. This month we take a trip to Essex.

**S**niff among the crab traps and paddle in the mud, then gallop down the beach and rinse it all off in the sea – there's a lot of fun to be had for a dog on the Discovery Coast, while piers and entertainment parks provide alternative family fun.

You can also enjoy a calmer pace of life from yesteryear too, strolling among the mighty oaks of Royal hunting forests and around unspoiled resorts like Frinton, and take in rural scenes celebrated in Constable's paintings or the nautical atmosphere along the North Sea coast.

Take it from us, Essex has something to offer for everyone and every dog.

## Things to see and do FORESTS

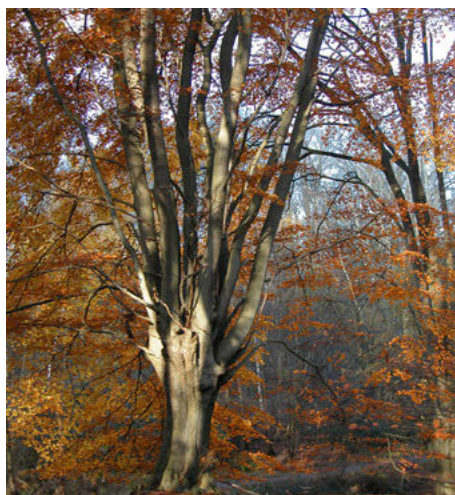
Native trees and wildlife are preserved in the ancient hunting forests of Hatfield and Epping among others.

Hatfield Forest is home to descendants of fallow deer stocked by Henry I, and they share these great trees with squirrels, rabbits, badgers and foxes. Fifty-eight bird species, including nightingales and kingfishers, also thrive. Can you find the 450-year-old oak? Something else to marvel at is The Shell House, a striking

18th century folly that is covered with thousands of tropical seashells.

Be invigorated by Epping Forest – 'the lungs of London' – which covers over 6,000 acres of woodland north of the city. Once a hideout for highwayman Dick Turpin, you'll now find parks, gardens, ancient monuments and 100km of trails to explore with your dog. Expect to meet horse riders and mountain bikes along the way.

Hainault Forest Country Park is two miles



A magnificent pollarded beech in its autumn glory in Epping Forest.

Pic © David Young/Shutterstock.com

west of Chigwell and offers refreshments, loos and parking.

**More info:** [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hatfield-forest](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hatfield-forest) and [tinyurl.com/n27jdd5](http://tinyurl.com/n27jdd5)  
**WALKS:** [tinyurl.com/oylhpld](http://tinyurl.com/oylhpld), [tinyurl.com/oyy6mdn](http://tinyurl.com/oyy6mdn) and [tinyurl.com/plshkoj](http://tinyurl.com/plshkoj)

## SEASIDE RESORTS

Many Essex beaches don't permit dogs during summer, so do check before making

## Useful contacts

### Tourist information

- [www.visitessex.com](http://www.visitessex.com)

### Local vets

- Forest Veterinary Centre, Epping, tel. 01992 575790.
- Medivet, Leigh-On-Sea, tel. 01702 476404.
- Haven Veterinary Practice, Frinton-on-Sea, tel. 01255 850456.

### Local pet stores

- Kaywoods Pet Aquatic & Reptile Centre, Clacton-on-Sea, tel. 01255 225100.
- Kirby Cross Pet Supplies, Frinton-on-Sea, tel. 01255 678698.
- Jaywick Pet Supplies, Clacton-on-Sea, tel. 01255 422398.





**Adder alert!**  
Adders inhabit the Discovery Coast area. Normally they are quite shy, but if your dog is bitten he must receive urgent veterinary attention.

Pic © Smudge/Shutterstock.com

## Dog-friendly places to stay

### Park Hall

**What:** Five-star accommodation in five luxurious self-catering cottages and two garden suites within the hotel. Set in 400 acres of private grounds for your dog to enjoy – with lakes to swim in – but please respect the wildlife. The hotel has a spa and clay pigeon shooting. Close by there's golf, fishing and a swimming pool.

**Where:** Park Hall Country House & Cottages, Park Chase, St Osyth, Essex CO16 8HG.

**Walks:** Super walks around the brook and lakes in the hotel grounds. About 3km to the beach. Walk details available from hotel.

**Pooch perks:** A dog sitting service is available, including walks. Feeding bowls, mats and drying towels provided. Doggy welcome pack too.

**Prices:** Double, B&B, from £110 per night. Dogs free.

**Contact:** [www.parkhall-countrycottages.co.uk](http://www.parkhall-countrycottages.co.uk) or tel. 01255 820922



### Cosgraves Holiday Park

**What:** A very dog-friendly holiday park with its own private beach. Dedicated caravans for pet owners, including luxury models. Heated swimming pool, clubhouse, kids' club, resident entertainer and shops on site. Restaurant and café five minutes drive away. Dogs on a lead, except in the exercise field.

**Walks:** Mersea is a tranquil island with lovely beach walks.

**Where:** Cosways Holiday Park, Fen Lane, Mersea Island. Next to Cudmore Grove country park

**Pooch perks:** Dedicated dog exercise field. List of local walks from reception.

**Prices:** From £99 (short stay). £15 per dog per stay.

**Contact:** [tinyurl.com/pl9crm6](http://tinyurl.com/pl9crm6) or tel. 01206 382898.



a trip. Mersea Island, which does permit dogs, is accessed by the Strood causeway and becomes a small island proper at high tide. Salty seadogs will love the nautical atmosphere of weatherboard houses, old houseboats, oyster beds and marshes. A favourite with fans of seafood, the area is renowned for shellfish and oysters.

You can have a picnic and enjoy the vast dog-friendly beach at Cudmore Grove country park in the east of the island, where there are loos, parking and refreshments. Or visit Mersea Island vineyard where dogs are welcome, except inside the café. There are tastings and you can take home a bottle or two of Essex wine if you wish.

Why not take in the sea air along the Victorian promenade at Walton-on-the-Naze? The Naze is a fast eroding headland (at a rate of two metres a year) jutting into the North Sea and an important stopping point for migratory birds. It has panoramic views and you may see traditional Thames sailing barges.

**WALKS:** Themed trails will take you and your dog around Walton-on-the-Naze. They include history and wildlife trails, and there's also one especially for children. Just north of the town is Naze Tower; around here you can walk along a clifftop trail

(dogs on leads please) or go down onto the beach to hunt for fossils and to visit the nature reserve. Parking by the tower. Visit [www.walton-on-the-naze.com/trails](http://www.walton-on-the-naze.com/trails)

There's also a footpath all round Mersea Island perimeter – see [tinyurl.com/ptkgnds](http://tinyurl.com/ptkgnds)  
**More info:** [www.visitparks.co.uk/places/cudmore-grove](http://www.visitparks.co.uk/places/cudmore-grove) and [tinyurl.com/nqehmxk](http://tinyurl.com/nqehmxk)

### CONSTABLE COUNTRY

Moving inland and heading northwards, John Constable country is Dedham Vale and the Stour valley, where you can experience the classical English landscape that so inspired the artist. There's an exhibition at Bridge Cottage, once inhabited by tenants of the Constable family and the focus for a couple of his paintings.

With guided tours and walking trails around the Flatford Mill area, soon you and your dog will be standing in the scene of Constable's great masterpieces. There's a café at Bridge Cottage with seating outside for dog owners, along with toilets, car parking and boat trips along the river.

**WALKS:** [tinyurl.com/qcsamh7](http://tinyurl.com/qcsamh7)

**More info:** [www.constablecountry.co.uk](http://www.constablecountry.co.uk)

### TOWNS & VILLAGES

● Frinton, one of the loveliest towns in Essex, is not at all commercialised. You can

step back in time along the old-fashioned shopping street and an estate of elegant art-deco houses. Enjoy a cream tea after walking the esplanade.

**WALKS:** Although the central beach is restricted during summer, your dog can have fun on the great sandy beaches north and south of the town and you can walk along the promenade between the sea wall and parade of colourful beach huts. ➤

### 5 Discovery Coast facts

● At 350 miles, the Discovery Coast of Essex has the longest coastline of any county in England.

● Stretching into the Thames Estuary for 1.34 miles, Southend Pier is the longest pleasure pier in the world.

● The *Mayflower* which carried the Pilgrim Fathers to the New World was almost certainly built in Harwich and its master, Christopher Jones, was born there.

● John Constable's famous painting *The Hay Wain* was based on a scene by Flatford Mill, near Ipswich.

● Greensted church is said to be the world's oldest wooden church, with timbers dating back to 1061.



## Get out there!



Pic © Nadinelle / Shutterstock.com

Make time for an evening walk to take in Southend's pier at sunset.

● Maldon, on the Blackwater estuary, is an ideal place to explore with your dog. The town hosts frequent collectors' and farmers' markets. Summertime brings a carnival, regatta and the country show. Autumn brings the oyster festival. At Hythe quay you'll find a 12th century church and the Thames sailing barges at their moorings – you can even go sailing in one.

Dogs are welcome in most of the Promenade Park, which has plenty to entertain kids, and there are loos and parking. Fast food is plentiful in Maldon, or catch your own crabs in the estuary.

**WALK:** Take a scenic stroll along the Blackwater river banks from Heybridge Basin and look out for waterfowl and wildlife along the way.

● Leigh-on-Sea (see main pic) is full of character with its old village, fishing boats and cockle sheds. Along 'cockle row', you can buy from the day's catch of renowned shellfish, and don't forget to pick up some canine cookies from Vanity Fur on The Broadway.

**WALKS:** Footpaths around Hadleigh Castle, dogs welcome on lead. More info at [tinyurl.com/nnqlu2t](http://tinyurl.com/nnqlu2t)

### DOG-FRIENDLY REFRESHMENTS

● The Coast Inn, 108 Coast Road, Mersea Island CO5 8NA.

**Provides:** A friendly atmosphere with a log fire and fresh seafood. As well as morning coffee, afternoon teas and evening meals you can treat yourself to home-made cakes. Dogs on a lead welcome in the bar where water bowls are provided.

**Contact:** [www.thecoastinn.co.uk](http://www.thecoastinn.co.uk) or tel. 01206 383568.

● Pier Hotel Harwich, The Quay, Harwich, Essex CO12 3HH.

**Provides:** A gorgeous hotel with coastal and harbour views. Watch the boats sail by while dining with your dog on the terrace, or in The Ha'Penny Bar brasserie. Open all day with local seafood a speciality.

**Contact:** [tinyurl.com/pedgqfd](http://tinyurl.com/pedgqfd) or tel. 01255 241212.

● The Lock Tea Room, Basin Road, Heybridge Basin, Essex CM9 4RS.

**Provides:** Complementary dog treats and water bowl. Dogs on a lead are welcome only on the terrace, but that's just fine as this is a lovely waterfront location. Ideal place to stop if you're walking alongside the Blackwater estuary. Owned by the manufacturer of Tiptree preserves. Everything from breakfast to cream tea is available and, of course, jam.

**Contact:** [tinyurl.com/o888tpk](http://tinyurl.com/o888tpk) or tel. 01621 854466.

## Dog-friendly walk

### Lingwood Common to Blake's Wood

**P**lanning a trip to Essex? Then make time to explore the county's second largest area of common land after Epping Forest, a survivor of a lost way of life. Here you can lose yourself in 214 acres of heath, gorse and coppice encompassing a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), ancient woodland and military defences designed to give Napoleon a run for his money.

The woodlands of Danbury and Lingwood Commons hide their 107m-high ridge-top location on one of Essex's highest hills. For centuries, self-sufficient commoners, under the Lord of the Manor's watchful eye, came here to graze their domestic animals, cutting down scrub and trees for fuel and creating an open landscape.

Lingwood and Danbury Commons were given to the National Trust in 1953 by the then Lord of the Manor, Mr F B Plumtree. At that time the Commons were an overgrown mosaic of habitats of different heights and ages: grass, heath, scrub, and scrub-woodland coppice. Today the Trust carefully manages the common to encourage the growth of rare flora and fauna.

See if you can trace clues to the common's unlikely use as a centre of military operation. From early times, Danbury's

elevated position between the Crouch and Blackwater estuaries has been turned to strategic defence and army encampment. Between 1780 and 1815 threat came with the Napoleonic Wars, while the First and Second World Wars saw the area used extensively as training grounds.

Don't miss exploring Blake's Wood, an ancient woodland on a sloping site spanning 100 acres of clear streams, valleys, mighty oaks, chestnuts and coppiced hornbeam. In spring the woodland floor is a riot of colourful wild flowers, including one of the best bluebell displays in the area, primrose and yellow archangel.

On the south-western edge of Danbury is Backwarden Nature Reserve, leased to Essex Wildlife Trust which manages a block of nearly 250 acres on Danbury Ridge; a mosaic of woodland, common and heath, streams and bogs. This is a great place to look out for wild flowers, reptiles (including adders, so watch out!), nesting birds and insects.

This month's featured walk is one of three linking Danbury and Lingwood Commons and Blake's Wood.

### ROUTE

**1** Starting in front of the NT site office Armoury car park facing the main road, turn right and head down

### Walk factors

**Distance:** Approximately 3.5 miles (5.6km).

**Time:** Around 2 hours.

**Start:** National Trust Armoury car park, Danbury. grid ref: TL781044

**Map:** Landranger 168 or Explorer 183.

**Terrain:** Grass tracks, tree roots, steep slopes. Muddy when wet.

**Dogs:** Welcome under close control. Please remove any dog litter responsibly.

**Loos and refreshments:** Cafe, pubs and shops in the village. Pub en route.

**Nearest vet:** Medivet Danbury (Chimes Veterinary Surgery), Main Road, Danbury, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 4NQ. Tel. 01245 227227.



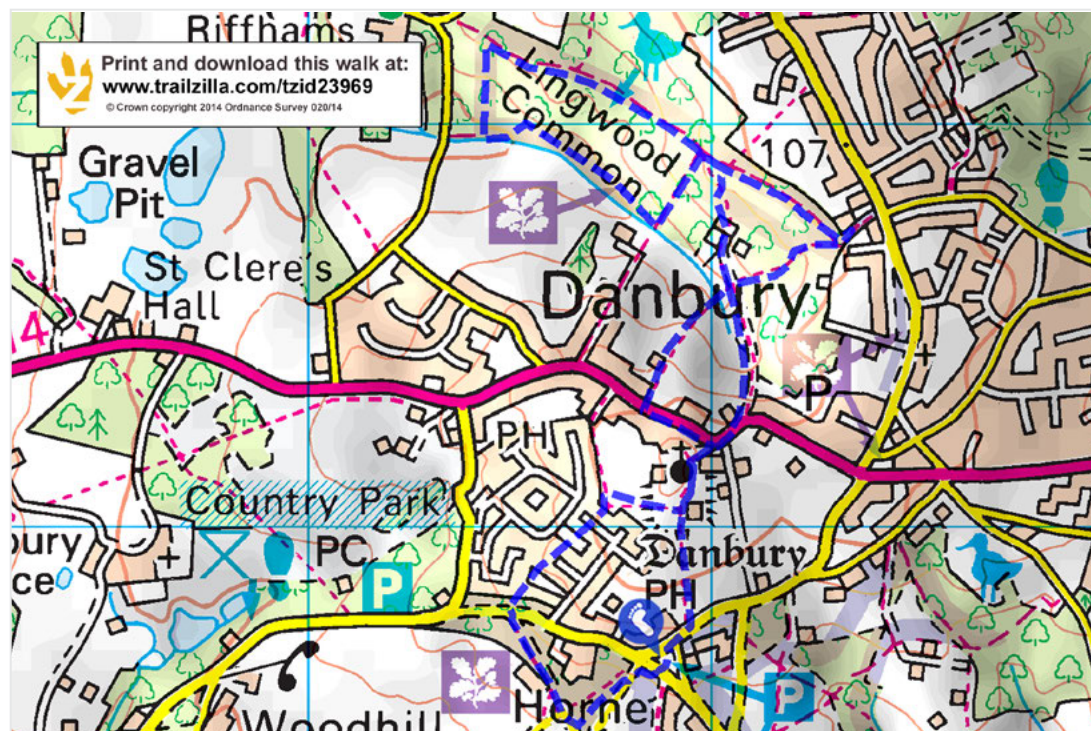
Bicknacre Road to the road junctions. Cross over and turn left into Sporehams Lane. After approximately 15m turn right at the footpath sign on the right (FP17).

**2** Keeping on this footpath, continue until you reach an unmade lane (Fitzwalter Lane). Ensuring you do not exit on to Sporeham's Lane, turn sharp right. The lane now continues to Woodhill Road.

**3** Cross Woodhill Road and follow the path. This section of the path runs between houses. When a junction in the path (with FP16) is reached, take the right-hand fork and walk down, with the parish church of St John the Baptist on the left.

**4** After going past the church, you reach a junction with FP20. Turn sharp left and follow the path down to Main Road (A414). With extreme care (this road is very busy) cross over and after a few yards reach Moorbridge Lane on the left. This is also a public footpath (FP59) but is unsigned as such. This lane is very steep at this point.

Now head down for about 200 to 300m and after entering a wooded area (Bellhill Wood) look out for a footpath 'crossroads' and turn



right up the path (FP15) with a close-boarded fence on the nearside.

**5** After a few metres you will have arrived in Lingwood Common (look out for the National Trust sign). After crossing two footbridges, continue until reaching the junction with bridleway 13 and turn left downhill (note this bridleway is not signed as such). If you miss this junction you will arrive at 'The Ridge' in which case you have gone too

far, so turn around and make your way back downhill along bridleway no.13.

**6** Continue along bridleway 13, passing a seat at the top of the hill. Continue along for about 30m to a bridleway junction and turn left onto bridleway 14, known as Coleman's Lane.

**7** Head down Coleman's Lane and just before reaching the ditch line and culvert look for a small path on the right hand side (unsigned). If you reach the houses then you have gone too far.

**8** Follow this path along the Lingwood boundary until reaching a marker post. This marker post is not marked in any way, but turn right at this point. Head along this path until reaching a National Trust sign. If you are continuing to Blake's Wood, then turn left at this point, exit the gate onto Riffhams Chase, turn right and walk up to the Blake's Wood car park (150m on left) and continue with the Blake's Wood walk. After Blake's Wood return to this point to continue with Lingwood.

If you are not going to Blake's Wood then turn right on to bridleway 13. There are two seats on this stretch to rest your limbs, and just after the second seat look out for the second path junction on your right (FP12).

**9** Turn right down FP12, exiting Lingwood

and retracing your route along Mooresbridge Lane until reaching a footpath crossroads (FP15). Turn right and follow the path until reaching Main Road (A414). You will come on to this road near to The Griffin Inn on your left.

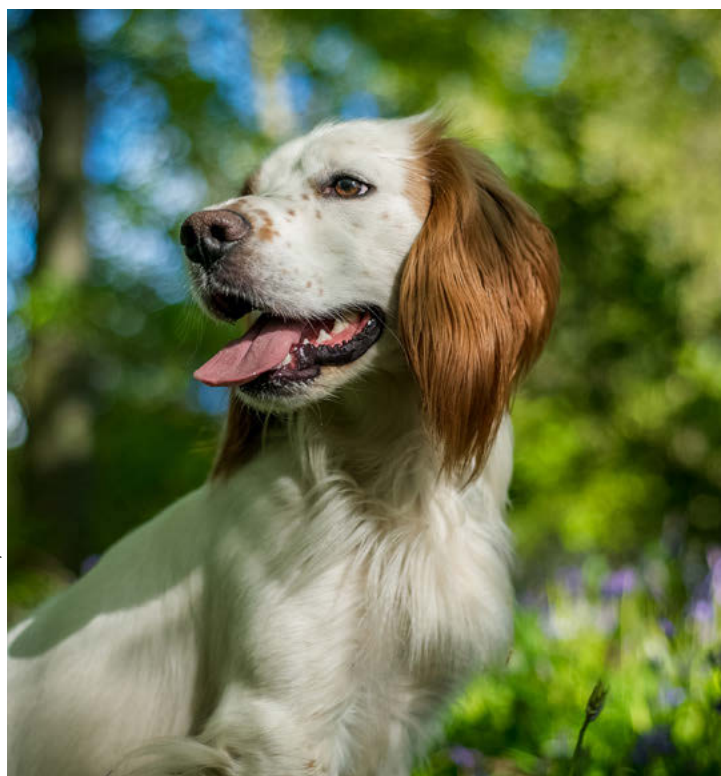
**10** Now carefully cross the road and continue left up to the church. Go through the gate by the side of the church and follow the footpath directly downhill past the Water Tower on the left, until reaching Penny Royal Road at the bottom.

**11** Turn right for the Cricketer's Arms for refreshment, or head to the car park which is just across the road. ●

● Walk courtesy of the National Trust ([www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)).

● Walk information has been provided in good faith and is intended only as a guide, not a statement of fact. Area layout and use can alter quickly – for example, although no livestock may have been present at the time the walk was written, this can have changed by the time it is walked again.

● Always be mindful of footpath signs and restrictions – again, these can change over time. If ever in doubt about following the suggested trail, don't!



Explore ancient woodland on this 3.5 mile walk.



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## December 2013

Socialisation explained; winter health; pet shampoo ingredients; fostering dogs; calming a canine hurricane; cherry eye; "So you really want a Husky?"; outdoor sports; feeding treats; liver diseases; Great Danes.



## January 2014

Fight the 'fur babies' fad; all about the heart; letting puppies off lead; teaching 'Yes' and 'No'; Mission Rabies; top 10 dog laws; pain relief; fashions in dogs' names; the Cinnamon Trust; Ben Fogle's Animal Clinic; Cairn Terriers.



## February 2014

Choosing a rescue dog; the shocking truth about pet product safety; caring for older dogs; feeding FAQs answered; training multiple dogs; fitting & using headcollars; do good dogs live longer?; Pekingese.



## March 2014

Teaching scent games; eye health; puppy product essentials; volunteering; step-by-step handling; dogs at weddings; socialisation; "Why do some rescues make adoption so hard?"; dogs in literature; Scottish Terriers.



## April 2014

Safety rules for dogs & children; positive training explained; grooming gear essentials; bloat; dental care; doggy fixes for non-dog owners; jumping up; dogs in cartoons; teaching tricks; Afghan Hounds.



## May 2014

Safety training around livestock; assessing rescue dogs; introducing dogs & babies; dog attacks – who's responsible?; pet vacuum cleaners tried & tested; socialising puppies; first aid for choking; Komondors.



## June 2014

Introducing dogs to cats; all about lungworm; improving your leadership skills; feeding for well-being; ear and paw injuries; travel safety; all about the brain; rehoming old and infirm dogs; Standard Poodles.



## July 2014

How to stop pulling & improve recall; being a volunteer for Hearing Dogs; missing dogs; training for stress-free travel; coping with diarrhoea & hormonal problems; Samoyeds.



## August 2014

How to find a good trainer; hazards in the home; stress-free walks; everyday fun training; Cushing's and Addison's diseases; pre-and probiotics; dogs of World War I; ensuring safe play; Skye Terriers.



## September 2014

How to find a good canine behaviourist; teaching sit, lie down & recall; dangerous treats; stealing & guarding behaviours; travel safety; new dog preparation; vet terms; Manchester Terriers.



## October 2014

Help finding missing dogs; social communities for breed fans; bad teeth; bereavement; raw feeding; teaching down and stay; finding good doggy day care; arthritis explained; Irish Water Spaniels.



## November 2014

Jumping up problems solved; all about Tellington TTouch; teaching dogs to listen; calming solutions; yeast infections; using sign language; walking in the Brecon Beacons, Mexican Hairless.

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# K9 QUERIES

**Dogs Monthly** has teamed up with the UK's leading experts in all canine fields to offer you professional advice for FREE!



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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

### 76 Veterinary & complementary therapies

New vaccination against leptospirosis; worries over flea treatment; coping with cataracts; "My puppy plays with his water – is this a problem?"; the safety of long-term pain relief; corneal ulcers; and online pet symptom checkers under the spotlight.

### 82 Behaviour & training

"He's aggressive to bigger dogs"; chasing shadows; new puppy worries; introducing a muzzle; digging up the garden; "He wees at visitors' feet!"; advice on buying a dog; new harness tried and tested.

### 87 General care & advice

"How do I get rid of tear staining?"; temporary hair colour products for dogs' coats; insuring a puppy; making an insurance claim; birthing worries; developing a puppy's confidence; plus a high-tech dog bed, doggy duvet and a range of natural pet food tried and tested.

## Our experts in this issue



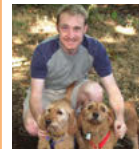
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Sue is passionate about teaching,  
using methods based on  
understanding and communication.  
She runs The Canine Centre.



**Wendie Patrick**, originally from Northern Ireland, is  
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grooms and offers grooming supplies, and owns  
and operates Dogs of Pride Grooming School in  
Nova Scotia, Canada.

● Any views or advice given in K9 Queries should not be taken as a substitute for medical advice, treatment or training, especially if you are aware your pet has a specific medical or behavioural complaint. When complementary therapies are mentioned, please seek the advice of a specialist vet regarding dosage and use and whether they are suitable for your pet. The authors cannot be held responsible for applications of any of the recommendations, advice or opinions contained therein. If you have any reason to be concerned about your pet's well-being, please consult your veterinary surgeon or dog trainer.

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### New vaccine query

**Q** I've heard some vets now recommend a new vaccine called L4. Is this something I should ask for when my dog has his next annual vaccinations?

*Graham Finch says...*

**A** You're correct in that there is a new vaccination available that potentially increases protection against a disease spread by rats called leptospirosis. This affects the liver and kidneys, is potentially fatal and is also transmissible to people, so it's a serious disease.

There are different strains of the bacteria that can cause this disease and the two most prevalent forms have been present in vaccines for years now. This new vaccination contains protection against additional strains of the disease.

The data on the occurrence of leptospirosis in the UK suggests these additional strains occur sporadically and uncommonly, so at present it may not be an essential thing to do in your area as your dog will be covered against the main strains routinely. However, I would check with your vet, as they will be able to advise you accordingly.



Pic © Ivonne Wierink/Shutterstock.com

Check your dog's fully protected against leptospirosis.

### Is he getting cataracts?

**Q** I'm worried about my Pekingese dog's eyes. He's 12 years old and in good health generally for his age. However both of his eyes have a blue haze or film over them and I'm worried he's developing cataracts. What should I do and is there any natural way of trying to prevent cataracts?

*Tim Couzens suggests...*

**A** First of all you should make an appointment with your vet to have your dog's eyes checked so you can get an accurate diagnosis and also make sure things are OK generally.

The blue haze you describe is common in older dogs and occurs due to hardening of the lenses with age. This is called

nuclear sclerosis and luckily doesn't interfere with vision. Cataracts are an altogether different problem and develop as a result of changes that take place in the material that comprises the bulk of the lens, resulting in varying degrees of opacity and loss of vision depending on the severity of the problem.

Cataracts can develop simply with age, after trauma or inflammation of the eye, as a result of other diseases such as diabetes as well as from inherited conditions.

If your vet does diagnose cataracts, hopefully they won't be too advanced and your dog's vision will not be too badly affected as a result.

There are several homeopathic remedies that

may help slow down the development of cataracts. Silica, calcium fluoride and calcium carbonate are all worth considering in the 6c potency given once daily. You could also use some Cineraria homeopathic eye drops externally as this remedy is also reputed to slow down cataract progression.

It's also possible a dog's diet may influence cataract development. I would suggest a low carbohydrate diet and preferably try feeding a raw diet where this is practical. In addition supplementing the diet with antioxidants, such as vitamin E and lutein, and adding extra vitamin C may also help.

If you notice a change in your dog's eye colour, get him checked out.



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## Is long-term pain relief safe?

**Q** Can being on long-term medication, such as Rheumocam for arthritis, cause any harm to my dog? If so, what would the side effects be and could it cause death? Are there any safe alternatives to such a medication? I'd be grateful for your advice.

*James Farrell comments...*

**A** This medication belongs to a group of drugs called non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs). They are effective in relieving pain, such as that associated with arthritis and stiff joints. Aspirin is a similar drug, though this should not be given to animals.

The active drug in Rheumacam is meloxicam and this blocks the pain receptors so the dog feels more comfortable. It can also have an effect on the

gastrointestinal system and occasionally this is where some side-effects may be seen. Things to watch out for in dogs who can't tolerate this drug include diarrhoea and sometimes vomiting.

If your dog shows any of these symptoms you should stop the medication and take him to see your vet. If he's been on this drug for a long time already, and has been without side effects, then he should be fine.

As dogs get older their liver and kidney function can start to deteriorate and so this is another thing to look out for. The drug itself will not cause death, but kidney or liver failure will, and so we must be careful in older dogs. Typical signs would be drinking an increasing amount of water and vomiting again.

Your vet would probably recommend blood tests if this

occurs to check the status of both the liver and kidneys. These important organs are responsible for processing the drug in the body (the liver) and then getting rid of the waste products after (the kidney), and so if they're not functioning properly due to the dog's age too much of these waste products accumulate in the blood causing him to be sick and drink more water.

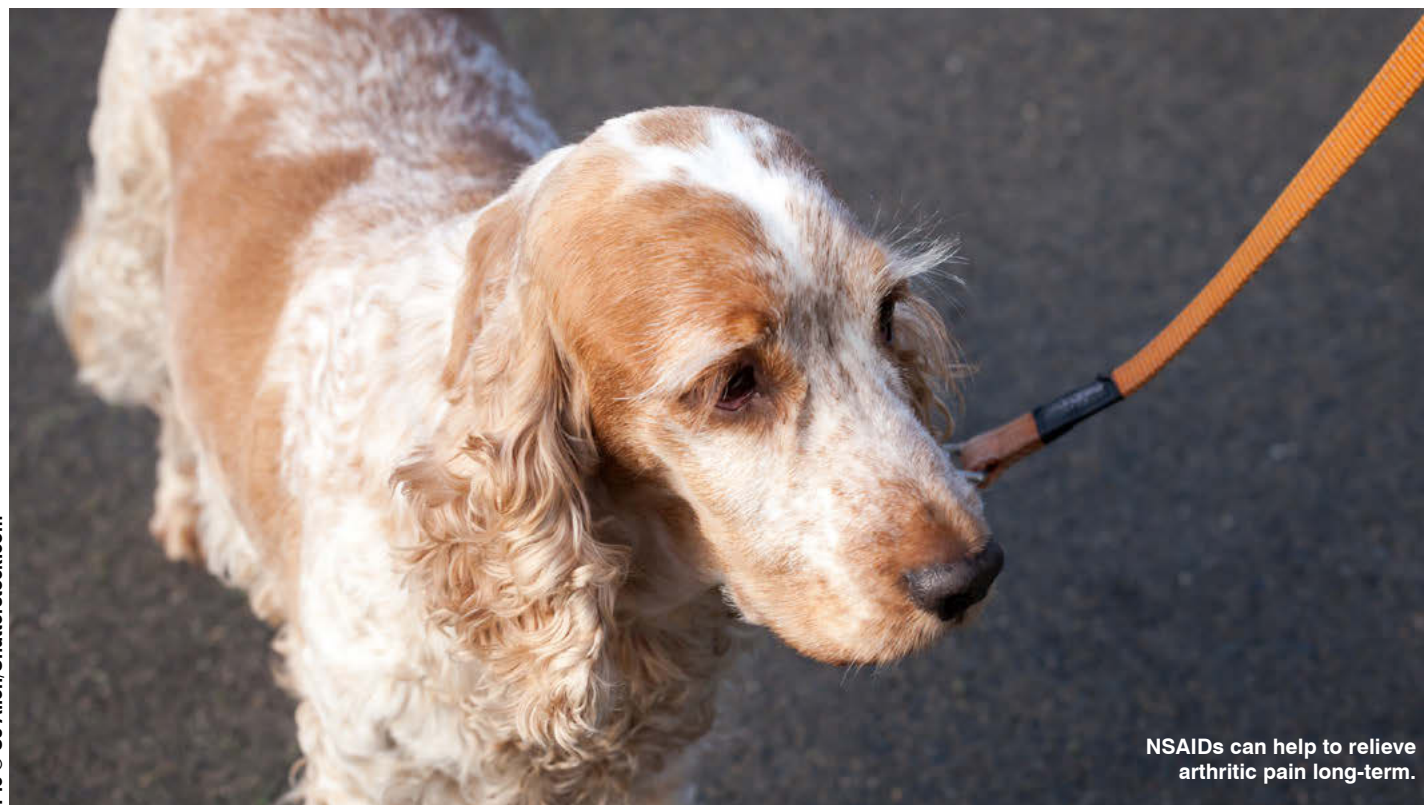
Very occasionally this drug can reduce the blood's ability to clot (like aspirin) and so watch out for blood in the stools and for bleeding gums. Again, if you spot this, seek veterinary advice.

These drugs must not be given at the same time as steroid anti-inflammatories (which are sometimes prescribed for itchy skin conditions), as given together they block the protective mucus in the stomach and can

cause vomiting and ulceration. Your vet would discuss this with you if your dog develops bad skin as he gets older, and explain alternative options for treatment.

All is not lost if your dog does end up having side effects and needs to stop taking this medication. There are other drugs and supplements that do not have these side effects, however you may find that they are not as good at helping the stiffness. These include things like glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate that humans take for stiff joints.

Alternative therapies such as acupuncture may also help if performed by a trained individual. Hydrotherapy and even just regular exercise (little and often, rather than long, strenuous walks) will also play their part in keeping your dog's joints mobile.



NSAIDs can help to relieve arthritic pain long-term.



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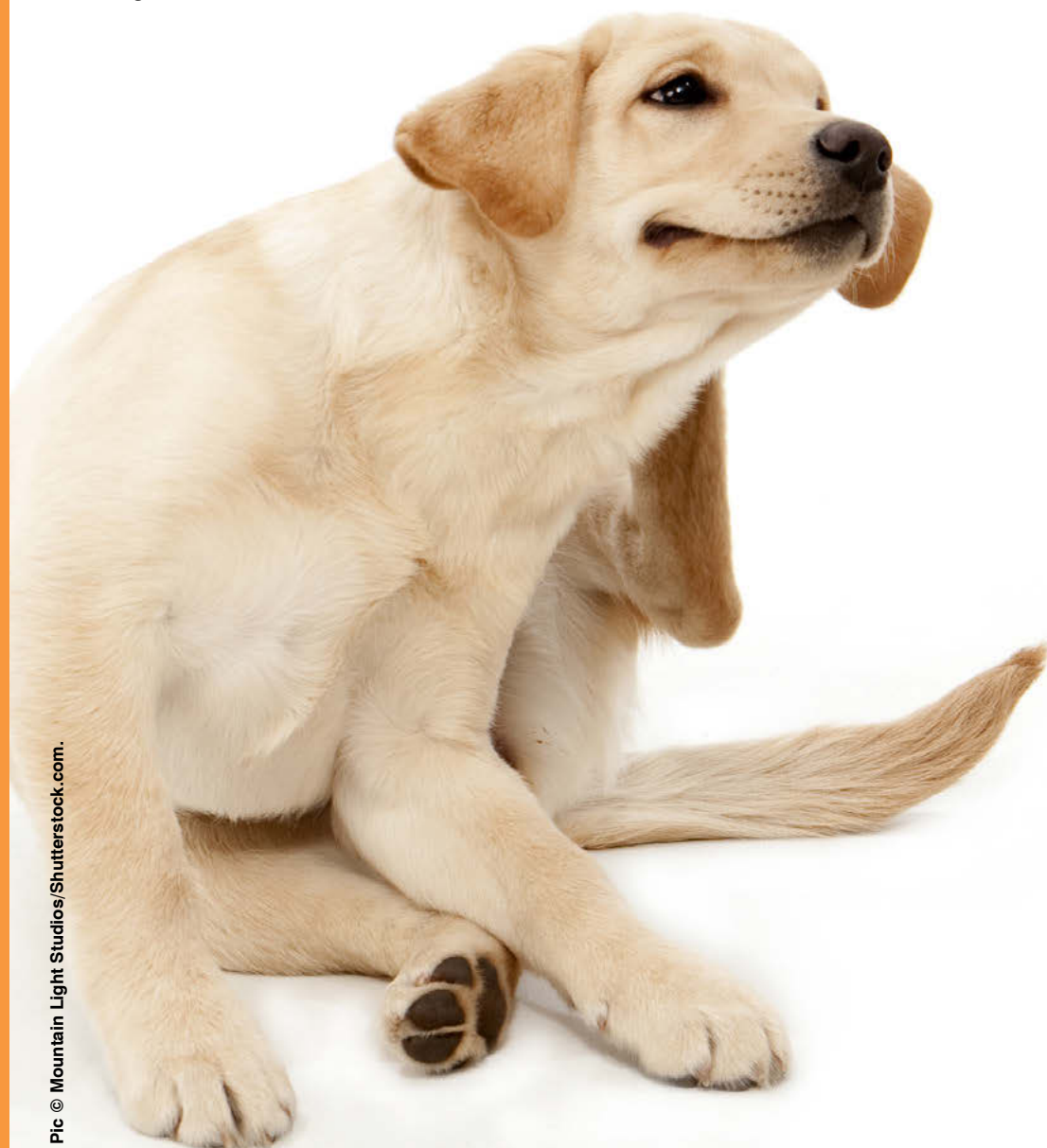
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Worryingly, there are reports fleas are becoming resistant to Frontline.



Pic © Mountain Light Studios/Shutterstock.com.

cat fleas that we find on dogs (although there is a specific dog species too).

Frontline should kill all species of fleas, but there have been reports of some resistance to it in warmer, wetter areas of the UK, like the south west. In these cases there are other brands of flea product, but most will be a bit more expensive than Frontline.

It is worth speaking to your vet even if you buy the product online as you can get detailed advice from the nurses and vets at your local surgery. Stronger products will be prescription only.

It is important to remember the flea life cycle is about three to four weeks and the egg and pupae stages (a bit like the butterfly life cycle) are very resistant to killing. Frontline will kill fleas on the animal, and one version of it contains a growth inhibitor that prevents any eggs laid by the fleas before they die from hatching.

Use of a house spray as you suggest is a good idea, along with vacuuming, turning up the central heating and boiling a kettle in the room (to increase humidity) before spraying. These all encourage the pupae to hatch out and so then the fleas/larvae are killed by the spray.

Do ensure you continue to treat all the cats and your dog as just one pet going untreated can bring more fleas into the house and start the whole process again.

To get on top of the situation it might be worth stopping the cats from going upstairs for two months once it is all treated, to prevent reinfestation and the spread of any hatching larvae. Also, some companies and councils offer a professional service to perform an industrial deep clean.

### Worries over flea treatment

**Q** Why is Frontline not working on my dog's fleas this time (it doesn't seem to be working on my cats either)? I've used it for years, and the last two times have done all my pets four-weekly instead of every two months, which used to be effective, plus I've used Virbac's house flea

spray too. I am vacuuming away like mad, yet they're all still scratching. I have six cats and one small dog and it's expensive to get Frontline when it's not working efficiently. Is there a good and cost-effective alternative? Our house is all tiled downstairs, but carpeted upstairs (and the cats do

go upstairs, and sometimes on the beds). Any advice gratefully received.

*James Farrell says...*

**A** I'm sorry to hear you're having trouble with the pesky parasites. Cats are usually the culprits for bringing fleas in in the first place and it's usually



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## Corneal ulcer advice

**Q** My vet has diagnosed a corneal ulcer in my three-year-old Pug that is taking a time to heal and has now been present for around two weeks.

I'm worried about him. Will it heal eventually?

**Graham Finch advises...**

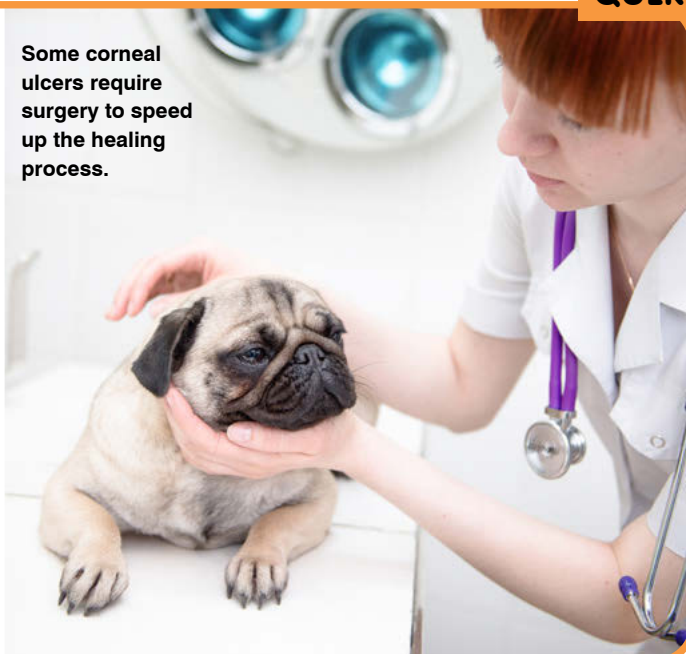
**A** Ulcers can be very tricky to heal and the healing process may take some considerable time. The cornea, the front part of the eye, has a poor blood supply and if a deep or infected ulcer is present it

takes a while to repair.

There is a new product called Remend Corneal Gel to help. This is licensed for superficial rather than deep ulcers, but may still help healing. Some ulcers require a surgical procedure to remove any non-healing scar tissue and this is usually performed under anaesthesia.

Some really deep ulcers may need a graft repair by using a flap of the conjunctiva to sew over the deficit. However, this is a fiddly procedure and I always refer these cases to a specialist ophthalmologist.

Some corneal ulcers require surgery to speed up the healing process.



Pic © Ermolaev Alexander/Shutterstock.com

## Making a splash

**Q** My puppy keeps playing with his water, pushing the bowl around, sticking his paw in the water and making the kitchen very wet. Do you think this is anything to worry about?

**Graham Finch says...**

**A** Puppies can be messy, can't they! As long as he is eating and drinking normally

and seems able to swallow, isn't dropping his food or anything unusual like that, then I suspect it is puppy playfulness and curiosity rather than an illness. There are conditions that can affect swallowing and the ability to lap water so if you are at all concerned there is no harm in getting a check over at the vet.

Puppies can be playful!



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Special feature

# Advice at the click of a mouse

**Sarah Deadman** of the Good Vet Guide explores whether online pet symptom checkers are a useful resource, or potentially harmful to your dog's health.

**I** think my dog has rabies, my cat probably has feline leukopenia, and my goldfish looks like he has trichodina. My pets are also overstressed, overweight and lacking in exercise. I probably feed them too much as well...

Who needs vets anymore when we've got the web? There are dozens of pet symptom checkers out there and they all promise to help you interpret your animal's symptoms. Of course, they all feature prominent disclaimers emphasising that they should be used for information purposes only and you should seek veterinary advice for any real diagnoses.

So why bother? Well, because in theory it's much easier (and cheaper) to type in a few search terms or answer a few questions and obtain a list of potential causes of your pet's symptoms. And, pet owners being pet owners, we will probably focus on the worst-sounding ailment and convince ourselves that is what our pet has.

This condition has been termed 'cyberchondria'

by a couple of Microsoft researchers who have studied health-related search behaviour in the field of human medicine. In their research paper they declared: "The web has the potential to increase the anxieties of people who have little or no medical training, especially when web search is employed as a diagnostic procedure."

If that statement is true for human ailments then it's a pretty sure bet that our anxieties will be amplified where our animals are concerned.

## VETS GIVE THEIR VERDICT

At the Good Vet Guide we reviewed several of the most popular online symptom checkers and asked a selection of veterinary surgeons and pet owners to give their general views. We consulted with Jo Crosby-Deakin of canine behaviour specialist K9 Solutions in Essex; Adrian Caunter, the Good Vet Guide's resident vet and also of Vet's Klinik in Swindon; Jonathan Nurse, principal vet

at Cherrydown in Basildon; and Kevin O'Leary, also of Cherrydown.

Jonathan says symptom checkers have their place, but is concerned about their accuracy and how pet owners may choose to interpret the results. One common problem he finds is that the symptoms presented by an animal are often not visible to the lay person. In addition, some symptoms are more significant than others in the context of a particular condition.

Jonathan would always prefer patients to come in first so he can establish the full facts. In those cases where symptom checkers are the first port of call, he says: "They have the clear potential to generate high levels of anxiety because pet owners inevitably fixate on the worst-case scenario. This has the potential to cause them to bury their head in the sand through fear, rather than address the problem at an early stage."

"Some pet symptom checkers appear useful," he adds, "but they sometimes leave out some of the questions that a veterinary surgeon may ask. In the final analysis, there is no quicker or better way of obtaining expert veterinary advice than simply picking up the telephone and talking to your vet."

Kevin's observations about the usefulness of symptom checkers is even more strident. "I'm struggling to see the point of them to be honest. While I'm all in favour of online research, I think it's better undertaken once a definitive diagnosis has been reached. It can end up wasting everyone's time because the vet has to spend more time educating the owner about why it's not a certain condition, rather than with just getting on with

treating the animal."

Adrian Caunter says patients sometimes come in with printouts from web research about what their animal's condition could be and ask why we aren't ruling this out, when it's something obvious to an experienced vet. "One example which springs to mind is the owner who was convinced his dog had rabies, despite the last reported case having occurred at the beginning of the last century," says Adrian. "I am not attributing that to online symptom checkers but it does illustrate the problems of self-diagnosis."

"Symptom checkers also have the potential to escalate an owner's fears, sometimes to the extent they're so worried about the likely prognosis they do nothing. This can result in unnecessary delays, which can mean illnesses that otherwise could have been treated simply become much more serious by dint of the owner not seeking earlier assistance."

## SITES UNDER REVIEW

We asked Jo to consult with a handful of her canine behaviourists and dog owners for their views on online symptom checkers. The ones they selected for review were:

- [www.petmd.com](http://www.petmd.com)
- [www.peteducation.com](http://www.peteducation.com)
- [www.vethelpdirect.com](http://www.vethelpdirect.com)

The sites were accessed using a mixture of laptops, tablets and mobile devices. The first aspect to stress is that the user experience varied hugely depending on whether the sites were accessed using mobile or static devices.

With petmd.com, which requires users to click on an image of the affected body part, all users expressed frustration at the difficulty associated with mobile navigation of the site. Users



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were also overwhelmed by the volume of information produced by the site, which caused most of the respondents to declare that they would have been better off picking up the telephone and calling their vet in the first place.

Peteducation.com was praised by some for the clarity of its layout and criticised by others for being difficult to navigate. All reviewers were unconvinced that using the application would have yielded better results than by making a telephone call to their vet.

Vethelpdirect.com was regarded as the best of the three sites reviewed for navigation and clarity of response. Most of the outcomes produced by our reviewers' interrogation of this site tended to encourage owners to wait 24 hours before calling a vet or to call the vet immediately. That being the case, no one could see the point of using such an application if most outcomes were to seek veterinary advice.

### CALL YOUR VET FIRST!

Adrian is keen to stress that the content and advice on such sites varies greatly – some vital questions may be missed, and an animal's medical history is not taken into account as it would be with a veterinary surgeon.

"If someone were to take the advice of a symptom checker – which again they are not supposed to – and if they were to self-medicate without the opinion of a qualified veterinary surgeon, the problem is that a follow-up may be missed and this can potentially turn into a serious issue as well," says Adrian.

He agrees a diagnosis is something that needs to be evaluated by a trained

veterinary surgeon – even over the telephone. "A phone call to your vet can actually be faster than scrolling through the symptom checkers, because we know what to look for, what questions to ask and what the real concerns and issues are. Any responsible veterinary surgeon will be delighted to take a call from an existing or prospective patient."

There you have it. Symptom checkers are helpful but are

no substitute for seeing a qualified veterinary surgeon. If your vet refuses to engage with you over the telephone, then find one who will. There are loads of amazing vets out there who go above and beyond the call of duty in providing exceptional care for our animals. If you know one then don't forget to tell the world by reviewing them on the Good Vet Guide (see [www.goodvetguide.co.uk](http://www.goodvetguide.co.uk)) so others may benefit too. ●

### About the author



**Sarah Deadman** started the Good Vet Guide in 2010 after her dog received poor treatment at an out-of-hours clinic. The loss of her dog prompted Sarah to build the most comprehensive, trusted and independent guide to the UK veterinary profession. Find it at [www.goodvetguide.co.uk](http://www.goodvetguide.co.uk)

**While online symptom checkers are helpful, they are no substitute for seeing a qualified vet.**



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## He hates bigger dogs

**Q** I have a two-year-old Pomeranian who is adorable in many ways, but often shows aggressive behaviour towards bigger dogs when we go to the park. He's fine with dogs of his own size. I keep him on a Flexi-lead but he runs around in big circles trying to get at other dogs, barking and looking wild, which is embarrassing. Any advice?

*Nick Jones advises...*

**A** Aggression towards other dogs has the potential for serious damage but it can be on many levels. These are not only relative to the size of the dog showing the aggression, but also relate to the actual behaviour when the dog has the opportunity to go into another dog's space and be aggressive by nipping or biting that dog.

I open my answer in this way as it's not unusual for me to assess a dog who shows 'dog to dog aggression' only to find that the behaviour is in the 'excessive' realm rather than the 'aggressive'. As I see a lot of dog to dog aggression cases, I have the benefit of being able to gauge such behaviour and make various comparisons through my day to day work.

I'm not able to see your dog in action, so I shall resist making assumptions, but I encourage you to find an experienced trainer who can come out with you to assess your dog's reactions and enable you to make measured introductions to a number of dogs to enable you to set up a positive plan of action.

For example, I recently saw a toy breed who fits the description you give in your question, and found that by using high-value food such as ham, a long training line (30ft) and some clear directions on how to behave, he was transformed in a 45-minute

walk in a busy park with many dogs about.

Very often this sort of behaviour can be quickly addressed with the correct handling and methodology to bring a dog back into a balanced state. This is where an experienced trainer can

spot these areas for you and show you how to handle your dog in an assured way that lets him see you're in control, but that walks are fun at the same time. Naturally, all dogs should be assessed on their own merits and there isn't a 'one size fits all' approach.

**If your dog shows extreme aggression to others, seek expert help.**



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## New puppy worries

**Q** I'm a first-time dog owner and now find myself with a nine-week-old Golden Retriever puppy as a result of my two young boys' pestering. Jake has now been with us for just over a week and I'm finding it challenging to say the least!

The house training is not progressing at all, I feel I'm constantly cleaning up after him and dread my house becoming smelly. I am sleeping on the sofa with him each night and he's not gaining weight and actually looks quite skinny, which worries me. I now know that where we got him from was not a great place – it was dirty and we just felt sad for the puppies.

However, the most worrying thing is his aggression. He will growl, snarl and bite and has broken the skin on all of us. I really don't know where to go or what to do. Help!

Butter wouldn't melt... but pups can be a handful.

**Ross McCarthy says...**

**A** Wow, that is quite a list of things. Puppies for the first few weeks can be quite exhausting.

Of course, it always helps to have a plan and know what you are doing beforehand.

The new DVD *Smart Puppy Training* by the Guild of Dog Trainers (available from [www.petsonfilm.co.uk](http://www.petsonfilm.co.uk))

will be very useful for you to assist with nutrition, care, routines, obedience and house training.

However, the aggression being displayed sounds most worrying and it would be both unwise and unsafe for me to offer advice in regard to that here.

You really need to seek the assistance of a professional canine behaviour practitioner, sooner rather than later to accurately assess your puppy, the aggression and make recommendations based on your dog and your situation.



Pic © Eric Isselée/Shutterstock.com

## She's a shadow chaser!

**Q** My Border Collie is full of energy and loves to chase a ball, however just lately she's started to chase shadows. This behaviour goes on for hours, even indoors. The problem is she gets so frustrated she barks non-stop. I tell her off and she stops for a few minutes until she finds another shadow, then she seems even more intent than ever to catch it. I'm at a loss to know what to do now, so any advice would be helpful.

**Sue Gilmore suggests...**

**A** This obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) behaviour in dogs is often an energy release mechanism, or the result of insecurity of some sort, for example anxiety or stress. It can be directed towards inanimate objects – food, dishes, bikes or, as in your Collie's case, shadows.

As you know, Collies are intelligent dogs and need

lots of mental stimulation and physical exercise. They are working dogs who are happy to work all the hours of daylight, so chasing shadows is an outlet, and although she will never catch the shadow, she will keep on trying! It's a sign of boredom with a daily routine that is repetitive. Obsessive behaviours are difficult to correct, however introducing new challenges and disciplines will help her to snap out of her new passion.

Agility, working trials, search dog training and similar activities that demand physical and mental application can all redirect the brain from mundane activities such as chasing shadows into a satisfying interest for both you and your dog. OCD can sometimes lead to aggression and destruction of property, so it may be that a muzzle is useful to keep you and others safe during her rehabilitation. You might also notice that she bites her own

feet continuously, chases her tail, digs (even solid floors) and as you are experiencing, constantly barking, which are all symptoms of OCD.

Effectively, you need to take control of the situation and provide guidance for her. You mention that she enjoys chasing a ball, so playing variations of 'fetch' would be

a good start. Hide some items for her to find and praise her when she's successful. By replacing the boredom with stimulating activities a few times during the day, ideally, the relationship between you and your Collie will improve; you'll find that she looks to you to provide leadership, which is satisfying for both of you.

**Collies needs lots of stimulation to help avoid unwanted OCD behaviours.**



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### Introducing a muzzle

**Q** After an upsetting time at the vet I've been advised to use a muzzle on my dog as he was showing aggressive behaviour to other dogs in the waiting room, and then to my vet in the consulting room. While this was upsetting for me, and of course the dog, I'm more concerned about his regular behaviour in public towards other dogs.

I have an appointment to see a dog behaviourist, but feel I need to make the muzzle introductions sooner rather than later. How do I set about this?

Nick Jones says...

**A** A muzzle is, in some cases, an essential piece of equipment to ensure the safety of others and protect your dog from his own potential actions.

The long-term hope when addressing aggression is that the muzzle can be removed once the dog is reliably showing good behaviour in situations that were previously giving concern.

One of the biggest hurdles to overcome with muzzle use is getting the dog to accept the device and to walk nicely without frantically trying to remove it with his paws. This is likely to occur if you put it on and go for a walk the very first time. Dogs who've worn head harnesses previously are more accepting of a muzzle, but if not, you'll most likely need to spend a week or two building up the time.

The type I most often use is the Baskerville Ultra, which uses a soft rubberised material and is sufficiently open to allow panting, drinking and feeding where required. It is free from sharp

plastic edges and fits most breeds well.

Set aside three five-minute sessions per day whereby you are able to feed your dog high value food or parts of his daily feed if he is very keen on this. To start with allow him to freely move about and, holding the muzzle in one hand and the food in the other, you can allow him to look at or sniff the muzzle for which you reward him immediately after.

Dogs who are more relaxed with the muzzle may well allow you to place it over their nose briefly on the first session; others are very wary of doing this and so it will inevitably take you longer. In any event, take your time and always avoid placing the dog under any pressure.

Once your dog is showing signs of acceptance, try placing a lead on your dog and sit on the end or place it on the leg of a chair to keep him a little closer while you

carry out the introduction. Build your way up to fastening the neck strap and then walking your dog around in the room, garden and then in the street as you develop a calm and positive approach to the muzzle introduction.

You can see me introducing a muzzle to a Labrador who was very food-driven (so I made good progress!) at <http://tinyurl.com/ok82gwz>



If carefully introduced, muzzles can be a safe, effective option.

Plc © Pixinoo/Shutterstock.com

### Tried & tested

#### Stop him pulling!

The Front Range Harness from Ruffwear is a new product that's been designed to be comfortable to wear and easy to put on. It has two lead attachment points – an aluminum V-ring centered on the dog's back for everyday walks, and reinforced webbing at the dog's chest for training or additional control – while the fit can be adjusted at four points.

**Dogs Monthly** reader Richard Griffin tried the harness on his Border Terrier, Sam, who tends to pull on the lead.

"First it's worth saying what a fantastic-looking harness this is," says Richard. "We have the Pacific blue colour, which looks really smart. The harness is sturdy and well made, but also looks comfortable for Sam to wear."

"When we first got the harness I

thought we needed a bigger size, despite having ordered it according to Sam's girth measurement.

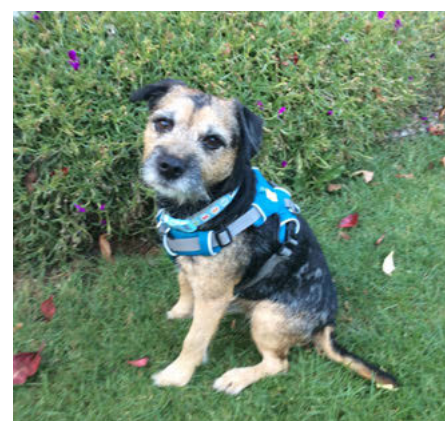
"There aren't any instructions on the packaging and we were trying to put it on upside down! After a few attempts we got there and found it fits very well. Ruffwear has since added a helpful 'How to fit...' quick start video at [tinyurl.com/pzd54dc](http://tinyurl.com/pzd54dc)

"Besides the product looking great, what I also love about it is that it does what I hoped it would – Sam is much better on walks!

"When we first got the harness he hardly pulled at all and I thought this product had revolutionised our walks. Unfortunately Sam seems to have got used to the harness now and has started pulling again, but not to the extent he did before. Plus it's easy to control him now when he does pull, and I certainly don't feel like I'm hurting or choking him, which I sometimes did when we used a plain collar and lead.

"Overall I love this harness and feel I have better control of Sam when we're walking. It's easy to adjust and Sam is always happy to let me put it on him – it means he's getting a walk, after all!"

Available in colours black, blue, pink and orange, and sizes XXS to L/XL, it costs £39.99. Find out more at [www.ruffwear.co.uk](http://www.ruffwear.co.uk) or tel. 01207 291247.



Sam loves his Front Range Harness.



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## Should we get a dog?

**Q** My grandson has just turned 14 and for as long as I can recall he's wanted his own dog. Each birthday and Christmas he is hopeful his parents will let him have one, but to date they haven't. My husband and I have been thinking we will buy him a dog and keep it living with us – he can train and exercise it and perhaps have it to stay. My question is what type of dog would be best suited to this lifestyle? He desperately wants a German Shepherd Dog, but I'm not sure I want one of those in the house and it may be a little large for him to walk. We've not had a dog in the family before, so this is all new to us. What's your advice?

*Ross McCarthy advises...*

**A** The 14-year-old boy inside me says get him a German Shepherd Dog! However, the adult me says 'are you kidding?!'. This does not sound an ideal situation at all and no breed is suited to this strange lifestyle. Your grandson will soon be off investigating new avenues in his life and most of that will not involve a dog. You and your husband may be left holding the lead and I presume that if you've made it to grandparent age without owning a dog you don't really want one.

My advice is to support your grandson to do some voluntary work in a boarding or rescue kennel, with a dog walker or at a training class or doggy day care and gain some experience. This way he can have some fun with dogs without the responsibility of owning one. Then, when he's old enough and in a suitable place to decide for himself if he wants a dog and what breed he wants, he can do that. If you get a dog for a 14-year-old, that's not fair on you, your grandson and, most importantly, the dog!

Volunteering to help at a rescue centre can lead to valuable dog care experience.



Pic © Annette Shaff/Shutterstock.com

## Stop the digging

**Q** My young dog digs up my garden to the point where I have no plants left – he's eaten them all! What was a nice lawn now resembles the surface of the moon and when it rains it's a mud bath. My husband wants to concrete the garden over, but I enjoy gardening and hope that my dog will grow out of his habit. How I can stop him digging?

*Sue Gilmore advises...*

**A** Bored dogs dig, so if your puppy is left in the garden for any length of time on his own he'll take it upon himself to find amusement, although understandably you don't find it amusing!

Your puppy needs lots of mental stimulation and outlets for his energy. It's so important to exercise dogs and interact with them with play and training. He is likely to be better behaved if he has an outlet for his energy, such as going for walks and giving him a toy to keep his interest; a Kong stuffed with tasty food is good to keep a puppy busy.

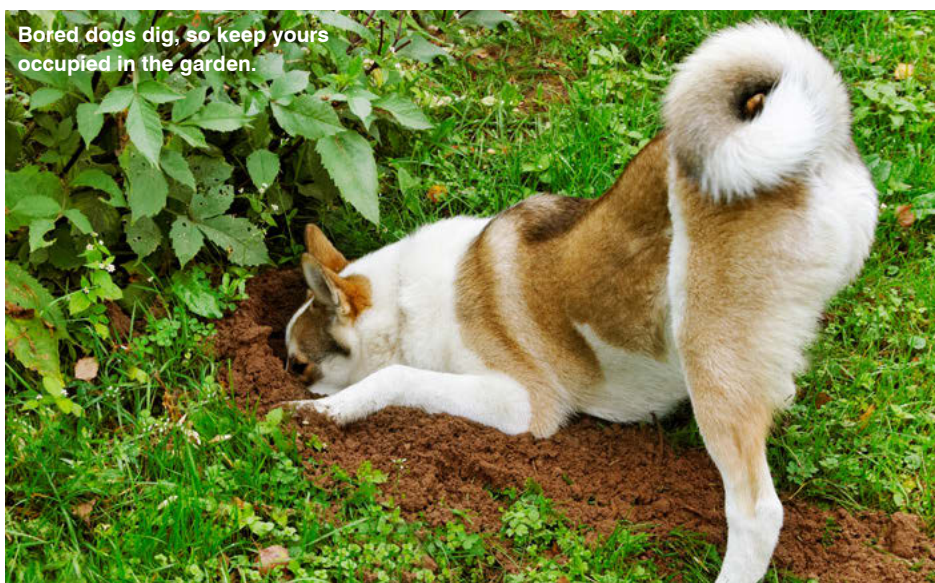
Your puppy is really wanting attention, particularly if he digs in front of you.

Your reaction would be to tell him off, but at least he is getting your attention, so it is far better to spend short periods throughout the day training and playing with him. There is no point in telling him off if you have left him unattended for long periods, because he will not link his digging activities with being reprimanded.

Correction must be given at the time the unwanted behaviour is taking place.

Having a secure pen in an area of the garden would restrict your puppy's digging, but really the answer is to stimulate your puppy mentally with brief training sessions and taking him out for regular exercise.

Bored dogs dig, so keep yours occupied in the garden.



Pic © Ratikova/Shutterstock.com



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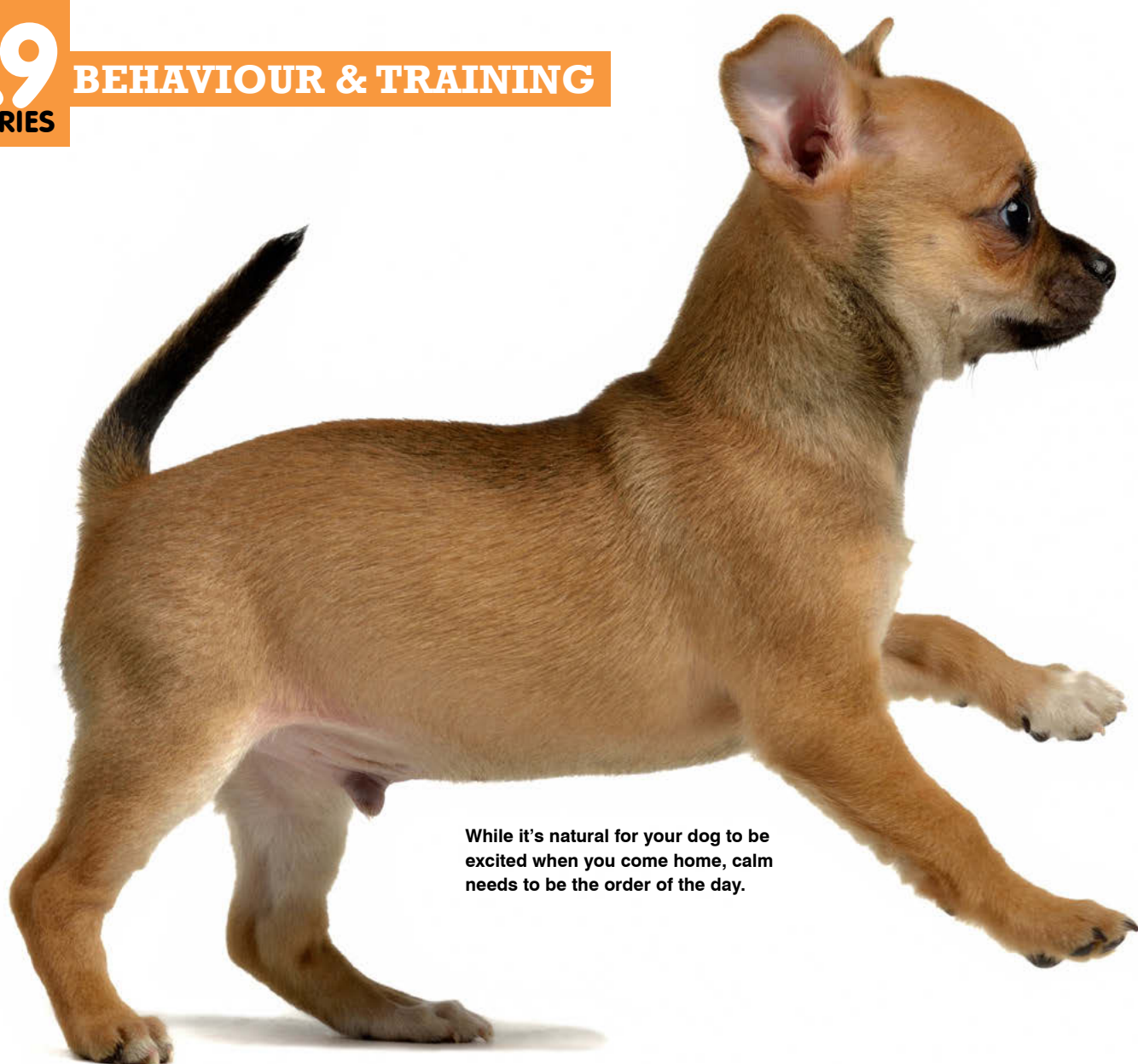
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While it's natural for your dog to be excited when you come home, calm needs to be the order of the day.

**Q** I have a six-month-old puppy, who's adorable in every way except that he wees at the feet of anyone who greets him! This behaviour is embarrassing and unpleasant. We tell him 'No' but it doesn't seem to make any difference. What can we do to stop this please?

*Nick Jones says...*

**A** This is what we call 'submissive urination' and is an involuntary action when a dog is excited or being made a fuss of. The key to helping your dog overcome this is threefold:

## An unwanted greeting!

**1 Ignore him**  
Ignore your dog upon returning to the home until he is calm enough for a controlled greeting. This will help ensure that he is not being further excited by the returning person, thus leading to him wetting at their feet. Visitors to your home should also be asked to ignore him until calm. Placing a lead on him when visitors arrive could help keep him away from their feet and to prevent him becoming overly excited.

Once calm, the greeting should be with him sitting and

then the other person gives a brief and calm hello. Avoid becoming excitable with the greeting to allow him to cope better with the situation.

Try to give your dog a toilet break before people visit the home to help him either wet less or not at all.

## 2 Avoid telling him off

Telling your dog off will only add to the anxiety at the time people come to the house rather than to subdue the wetting. There can often be a gap between the owner's

intended message "Stop weeing on people's feet!" and the perceived message "I'm cross with you when I come home". Utterly ignore any wetting and, if needed, put him away for a short time as you wipe it up. Place your focus on point one.

## 3 Allow time

The vast majority of young dogs will grow out of this behaviour as they mature, when they start to take life at a calmer pace – and improve their bladder control in the process!



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## Tear stains

**Q** How can I get rid of tear staining around my dog's eyes?

Wendie Patrick advises...

**A** This can be a common problem, especially with smaller breeds such as Shih Tzus and Lhasa Apso, though it can occur in many others. No one has ever come up with a definitive answer as to what causes tear staining, so it's always a challenge to find out how to get rid of it.

If the tear staining is only at certain times of the year it's most likely to be due to seasonal allergies, just like hay fever, or an environmental factor, for instance closed-up homes in winter and the use of household cleaners, and so on. Diet can also be a factor, so feed a good quality diet, perhaps grain-free without wheat or oatmeal, as this alone may correct the problem.

From a grooming standpoint there are a few things you and your groomer can do to help the situation. Your groomer may be able to 'clean out' or trim/clip the longer hair at the inside corners of the eyes to help air flow and allow tears to run away, rather than soak into the fur, inviting bacteria to grow and therefore accelerating the unsightly staining. You, or your groomer, can also check to ensure there are no eyelashes growing inward. If there are any present, these will be scratching the surface of the eye, causing the eye to tear more. If this is the case, consult your vet as surgery may be required if the eyelid itself is turned inwards, a condition known as entropion.

Simply washing your dog's face with a warm facecloth each day and keeping the area clean may also help. There are a few no-rinse face washes available, though make sure you use a dog

product, not a human one.

Try Face Time Foaming Face Wash by ShowSeason ([www.showseasonproducts.com](http://www.showseasonproducts.com)).

To help break down bad bacteria you can also carefully spray the area with colloidal silver, which is available in most health food stores or from naturopathic vets. This will encourage healthy bacteria to grow and can reduce tear staining greatly. However, you do need to spray the area up to four times a day, so it's a case of remembering to keep up the regime.

Some products that claim to get rid of tear staining are given internally. However, please be aware most of these contain a low-grade antibiotic and can build up in your pet's system – therefore when they need an antibiotic treatment for any other issue in the future they may have built up a resistance to them.

Another range of products available is Love My Eyes by Pure Paws ([www.store.purepaws.net](http://www.store.purepaws.net)).

This is a safe, topical four-step system. It's time-consuming but provides great results and is used by show dog handlers worldwide.

In a nutshell, you can do things to help and possibly clear the tear staining up, but the most important thing is to follow a regime you can stay on top of and maintain, as there is no real quick fix for this problem. If you find one, please let me know!



Pic © kmintstock/Shutterstock.com

Shih Tzus are prone to tear staining, which can be a real challenge to deal with.

## Tried & tested

### Bedtime comfort

**What:** Ideal for older dogs with arthritic joints who'll appreciate the supportive memory foam inner, this flat copper dog bed from Copper Clothing Ltd is covered in a waterproof, copper-infused fabric – this metallic element used due to its antimicrobial, health-boosting qualities.

Charlie loves her bed!



**Price:** The bed comes in brown and sizes regular (L100cm x W76cm x D12.5cm) and large (L137cm x W91cm x D12.5cm), priced from £94.99 (a round version with sides is also available, priced from £99.99).

**Where to buy:** Visit [www.copperclothing.co.uk](http://www.copperclothing.co.uk) for details or tel. 01883 342122.

**Tester:** Dogs Monthly designer Sally Stray.

**Verdict:** "I've had one of these beds on test for the past 10 months, and it's now much loved by my 15-year-old Tibetan Terrier Charlie," says Sally. "Charlie has poor eyesight and at first the feel of this memory foam bed, which she sinks slowly into, threw her. But after around 10 days she got used to it and now I can't get her off it!"

"The memory foam is lovely and supportive for

Charlie's aching joints, and as it holds her body shape well she can hop on and off more easily than she can a traditional bed.

"I've also been impressed with the outer material. Charlie digs and scratches at her bed for a good few minutes as she makes a 'nest', with sharp, terrier claws, but she hasn't managed to damage it.

"It's very easy to keep clean too. The manufacturers claim the copper-infused material is anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-viral and I can vouch for the fact the bed never gets smelly. Her other bed goes in the wash at least every month, but all I do with this one is brush off any loose dirt, wipe it with a wet cloth and then rinse it under the outside tap, or with a hosepipe, and it comes up like new.

"This bed's well worth the money, especially for older dogs for whom comfort's an issue."

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### Insuring a new puppy

**Q** I'm getting a puppy soon and the breeder says he'll come with four weeks' worth of free dog insurance. Is this worth having, or should I sort out my own insurance straight away? What are the pros and cons of this free insurance?

**Mark Effenberg says...**

**A** It's common practice for your new puppy to be offered with some kind of short-term free

insurance. Usually the breeder will pair up with an insurance company to be able to offer this service with their puppies, and then the insurer will write to you at the end of the free period with a full insurance offer, when a premium will become due.

It's vitally important to consider insuring your puppy from a young age to ensure he's fully covered should he develop any ongoing conditions. Whether this is with the same company

your free insurance is with, or a competitor, research the market to find out what options are available, and consider how much you have to spend on the policy.

Insurance companies will often offer price reductions and special offers for new policies, but just be aware any pre-existing conditions developed in your free insurance period will not be covered by a different insurer, and most will implement an exclusion period, whereby illness is not covered for the first 10 days of a new policy.

### Coat of many colours...

**Q** I want to add some temporary colour to my dog's coat. What can I use?

**Wendie Patrick advises...**

**A** A temporary colour can be achieved with hair chalks, canine nail polish, coloured hair or feather extensions and accessories. You can make or buy stencils and apply coloured glitter, or spray on Pet Paint ([www.petpaint.com](http://www.petpaint.com)) and have all kinds of fun!

The main thing to look out for is that the products you use are designed for use on dogs and that they are recognised as safe. Food colouring and some products aimed at children can also be used safely, but watch that the items are not made in China as some pigments can contain lead and you don't want your dog licking this off or absorbing it through his skin.

Remember too that any temporary products are just that, so be aware that some of the colour may rub off on furniture and carpets.

It's important your puppy is insured should he develop any ongoing conditions.

Pic © Oleg Malyshev/Shutterstock.com.



### Tried & tested

#### Super snug!

**What:** A faux-fur covered 10.5 tog duvet in a variety of animal print designs and in three sizes to suit Chihuahuas to Great Danes. The luxurious removable cover with Velcro fastener is machine-washable, as is the duvet.

**Price:** From £28.

**Where to buy:** Visit [www.theanimalarm.com](http://www.theanimalarm.com) or tel. 01452 702062 to order.

**Tester:** Caroline Davis, **Dogs Monthly** features editor.

**Verdict:** "Bella, my Papillon, thinks this duvet is awesome – in fact I can't shift her off it now the weather has got colder. Trouble is the cats also jostle for space on it too, so it can get a bit crowded at times. Suffice to say, all my pets give it the thumbs up.

"I think it's exceptionally well made, light yet snuggly,

and I especially like the strong, well sewn-in Velcro fastener, which makes it easy to remove and replace the cover for washing; no zips to break or snag. I pop it on my office floor at home for Bella to nap on while I'm working, and then at night it goes in her bed. I think, though, I need to get a spare to ensure one's always available as there are complaints when it goes in the wash.

"All in all a great piece of bed kit for all dogs (and cats). Ten out of 10 from me and mine."

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## Birthing worries

**Q** My bitch is due to have puppies in a couple of weeks and I'm worried about the birth as this is a first for us both. How will I know when she's about to give birth – are there any signs to look out for?

*Sue Williams says...*

**A** Whelping is a very special time, but it does present risks to both the bitch and puppies. You need to be prepared so you can identify if things are wrong and assist if required. I'd recommend a book called *Book of the Bitch* by J M Evans and Kay White (available from amazon.co.uk at £8.86). This explains every stage in detail, including things to look out for.

It is common for a bitch to refuse food and even be sick just before the onset of labour.

Whelping basically takes place in two stages. Stage one is where the cervix is opening, and it's during this time that bitches get restless, panting and shredding their beds to make a nest. This stage varies tremendously in time from bitch to bitch and can last from as little as a few hours up to three days.

During this time provide your bitch with lots of clean newspaper to shred and keep a close eye on her.

Labour itself is marked by powerful contractions where the bitch is pushing and squeezing the puppy out. It is vital that you keep a close eye on her during this stage. Most bitches will give birth easily and instinctively know what to do, but some, particularly those who are first-time mums, are confused. This is when it is vital you are on hand to help if necessary. Ring your vet if you are worried.

A healthy litter is everyone's aim, so learn what to look out for during whelping.



## New product

### Flea and tick repellent

Alamo Spot On repellent for cats and dogs contains Geraniol, a scientifically-proven, natural pesticide, without any potential harmful side effects. The manufacturers claim this non-toxic product will cure and prevent flea infestations, while being effective against ticks, mosquitoes and sand flies. It starts working straight away, with fleas cleared within 48 hours and protection lasting up to 30 days. Priced at £16.49 for five pipettes, find out more at [alamopetcare.co.uk](http://alamopetcare.co.uk) or tel. 01732 760900.



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Some insurers will pay your vet direct for any treatment you claim for.



Pic © Sergey Nivens/Shutterstock.com

## How are claims paid?

**Q** My dog is insured, but what is the correct procedure to follow if he needs veterinary treatment?

**Do I pay the vet direct and then claim off my insurance company, or does the vet claim direct from my insurance company so I don't have to find the funds to pay him initially?**

**Mark Effenberg advises...**

**A** The procedure will vary with each insurance company. Some companies will pay the vet direct, so after your pet's received treatment you and your vet must fill out the appropriate claim forms for your policy, and then, once approved, your vet will receive the funds direct into

their account for the claim.

However, this isn't the case across all insurance companies and some will only pay the policyholder for any claims made. This means you would have to pay the vet yourself, before being reimbursed.

When you're taking out an insurance policy make sure you read the policy terms and conditions and take the

time to understand what the procedure is for making a claim. If your pet is involved in an accident, or develops an illness, you want to spend your time with him, not reading through insurance documents

Having a clear understanding of the claims process means you can relax knowing your pet will be covered to receive any treatment he needs.



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## He needs a confidence boost

**Q** My 12-week-old puppy Fred is timid when people come to the house. He was OK to start with but is getting increasingly nervous, so much so he now hides behind me. How can I boost his confidence?

Sue Williams says...

**A** Puppies all have different personalities and some are more sensitive than others. The important thing is that we adjust and are sympathetic to their needs. It's important you socialise Fred with people so he develops into a confident dog, but you must make sure you do this in a way that doesn't overwhelm him. You need to teach him that people are pleasant, and get him to associate them with something nice. With puppies I find food is ideal.

Arrange for visitors to call then, when they arrive, have Fred in another room and leave him there until they've come in and sat down. Tell your visitor to completely ignore him – this means no eye, verbal or physical contact. Allow Fred into the

room and, once he has settled and is calm and relaxed, reward him yourself with some tasty treats. Make sure you don't try to console or comfort him as this will inadvertently reward the nervous behaviour.

Progress by getting your visitor to drop some treats on the floor for him. However, when they do it's important

they continue to ignore him. If he's happy they can offer him a treat from their hand, but he must go to them to take it. If he remains calm and relaxed they can engage with him, but make sure they don't force themselves on him. Above all, be patient and don't rush.

The more people you can get to do this the better and Fred will start to look forward

to your visitors as they are the providers of nice tasty treats. Seek the advice of an experienced puppy trainer who will be able to make sure you follow a confidence building programme correctly.

I cannot stress how important it is to overcome this in the correct fashion while Fred is young. If you get it wrong now it will have a lasting effect. For help visit [www.godt.org.uk](http://www.godt.org.uk)

Young dogs need to learn to enjoy social contact.



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## Tried & tested

### Tasty!

**What:** Nutritionally balanced, natural and slow-cooked to lock in goodness, Forthglade's Lifestage range of pet foods help keep your pet healthy and happy. Made with fresh meat, brown rice and vegetables, the meals are complete and there are eight tasty varieties.

**Price:** RRP 70p for 125g, £1.19 for 395g, or a multi-variety case of 12 x 395g for £13.50. Where to buy: Online at [www.fetch.co.uk](http://www.fetch.co.uk) or from pet stores, including Pets At Home.

**Tester:** Caroline Davis, **Dogs Monthly**

features editor.

**Verdict:** "Having a fussy little Papillon to feed, I was glad to try Forthglade's senior chicken with brown rice and vegetables. I usually give her raw or boiled chicken meat and beef mince, as she'll only eat fresh food, so I was pleased to see her tucking into Forthglade with gusto and be reassured that the food is free from preservatives, artificial flavours and colours.

"It smelled pretty good to me too – which is always a sign of a good pet food. There's no waste, with clean dishes every time, so it's money well spent – and it gives me a break from boiling up and stripping chickens!"



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### Breed facts: Utility group



**C**how Chows are like Marmite – you either love them or you don't. Whatever your predilection, it cannot be denied that there is something quite unique about this proud breed. It's outward leonine appearance, with luxurious coat and inscrutable eyes, is likened to an Oriental teddy bear by some, yet underneath all that 'cute' fluff lies a dog who can be aloof and stand-offish with people he doesn't know, yet is affectionate and devotedly loyal to the people he gives his heart to and considers' his'.

These days you don't see many Chows about in Britain. While they were popular back in the Twenties and Thirties, being the preferred canine darlings of the rich and famous due to their exotic appearance, and showcased at events like Crufts, their numbers in the UK waned from the 1980s onwards as the eight or so big Chow show and breeding kennels gradually closed, due to their owners' retirement or death.

Says Sheila Jakeman, chairman of the Chow Chow Club and rescue coordinator for the Chow Chow Breed Council: "There are now only a handful of small, dedicated breeders who only have the occasional litter – I myself haven't had one for two years. Kennel Club (KC) registrations dropped from some 1,500 per year in the 1960s to around 1,000 in the Seventies, 700 in the Eighties to around 400 today. The breed, frankly, is at risk in the UK, even though we have a large gene pool."

Well-known people who owned Chows include Walt Disney's wife Lillian, President Calvin Coolidge, Sigmund Freud, writer Martha Stewart and singer Janet Jackson.

### HISTORY

According to scientific research, the Chow Chow (often shortened to Chow) originated in China some 2,000 years ago, although there is a possibility that the historians mistook

# A dog like no other

Your at-a-glance guide to the **Chow Chow**.

Chows for the Chinese Shar-Pei, while another line of thought is that they were brought to China by invading Mongols 3,000 years ago.

However they got there, the Chow was developed and bred in China as a dog used to hunt leopard, wolf and wildfowl, and was renowned for its strength and wilful character. Indeed, they can be wilful to this day, and are powerful dogs under all that fur.

As well as being used as a beast of burden to pull sleds, Chows were employed to guard both people and livestock, and again that guarding trait remains to the present day; Chows are protective of their homes and owners.

Chows were also a valuable commodity to the ancient Chinese for their fur and meat, although any type of dog also providing the means to feed and clothe people was also fair game.

While the name Chow Chow is generally thought to refer to

the breed being a food source in its native country, it is in fact the Chinese term for the knick-knacks and trinkets aboard the trading ships that first brought Chows to Western Europe back in the late 18th century.

Breed enthusiast Iris Bowker, of the Yorkshire-based Chow kennel Sherivale, researched the breed's origins in the UK and wrote for the Chow Chow Club: *In 1820 an English newspaper reported an Oriental dog imported from China that had a thick red coat and a blue-black tongue, which attracted widespread attention. Some early reports of the Chow in England mention that several Chows were housed in the London Zoological Gardens and were identified as the wild dog of China. It is known that Queen Victoria was given a Chow Chow in 1865.*

*In 1880 a Chow bitch, Chinese Puzzle, was exhibited at the Crystal Palace Show in London. Her weight was 32lb and her height was 16 inches*

*at the shoulder, her owner was Mr W K Taunton. But it was the Marchioness of Huntley who was the pioneer of the breed in England. In 1887 she imported a male dog who she called Periodot, and bred Periodot II whom Lady Granville Gordon bought and then established a famous Chow kennel. She was also instrumental in getting the breed recognised by the Kennel Club.*

As regards the breed's unusual tongue colouration, Ms Bowker further writes: *There is a very old Chinese fairy story that says that as the world was being created, only the Chow Chow dog was allowed to lick up all the little pieces of blue* ➤

### Safety first

For safety's sake (both child's and dog's), no young children should be left unsupervised with any dog.

### Expert tips on buying a puppy

- Always buy from a reputable breeder, such as a breed club member, to ensure you are not buying from a puppy farmer.
- View the pup, plus his mum, littermates and (if possible) his father, in the breeder's home prior to purchase. Check the parents' temperaments are good, and ask the breeder lots of questions about their health and care.
- Meet as many Chows as you can by visiting

dog shows, attending breed club social events and talking to owners and breeders.

- Take your time finding the right breeder; be patient as it takes a long time to breed a good, healthy litter.

- Start training as soon as you get the puppy home; find a good trainer to help, and begin puppy socialisation classes once your pup is fully vaccinated.



## KC facts

The Utility group consists of miscellaneous breeds of dog mainly of a non-sporting origin, including the Chow Chow, Bulldog, Dalmatian, Akita and Poodle.

The name 'Utility' essentially means fitness for a purpose and this group consists of an extremely mixed and varied bunch, most breeds having been selectively bred to perform a specific function not included in the sporting and working categories. Some of the breeds listed in the group are the oldest documented breeds of dog in the world.

Chows particularly enjoy cold, dry weather, and, like any densely coated dog, can become uncomfortably hot in warm weather if not kept cool.

### How much?

Expect to pay around £1,200-£1,500 for a KC-registered Chow puppy from a reputable breeder. Contact the breed clubs (see 'Useful contacts') for breeder information and to source a puppy from a reputable kennel.



A cream  
Chow Chow.

Pic © Vladimir Yessikov/Shutterstock.com



## Breed focus

sky which fell to earth when the stars were being set in their place – and that's how he got his blue tongue.

Lady Gordon and her daughter Lady Faudel-Philips were also inaugural members of The Chow Chow Club, the UK's parent club of the breed, which was formed in 1895.

### TEMPERAMENT

Older books (pre-2004) containing information on all dog breeds tend to state that the Chow temperament is uncertain, with one describing the breed as having 'a reputation for ferocity, but, although a formidable opponent, it is unlikely to attack unless provoked.

'It is a faithful, odour-free dog which makes a good pet, but prefers to look to one person as its master and needs firm but gentle handling...'

Advises Sheila: "It's true to say that Chows are reserved, and at one time their temperament was unreliable with regard to people, but these days responsibly and carefully bred Chows' temperaments are more reliable. However, it is vital that they are socialised correctly from babyhood onwards."

Adds Sandra Stafford, president of the Chow Chow Club: "Chows do tend to be rather aloof with strangers. They are normally good with children and other pets within their household, providing they have been well-socialised from the earliest age possible. They generally behave well at shows and around the home if taught to do so but, as with all dogs,

they should be kept under close control in rural situations when there are other dogs and livestock about."

Pauline Lock, health officer for the Chow Chow Breed Council, says: "In general, Chows are calm, quiet and undemanding dogs and make lovely family dogs, although some may not be trusted with small animals such as cats, rabbits and so forth."

While usually quiet in the home and around people, the Kennel Club states that Chows will vigorously defend their home and owners should they feel the need to. They can be almost cat-like in their mannerisms and tendency to keep themselves clean, and they do not like getting their feet wet!

### SUITABILITY

As regards the type of people and homes Chows are suited to, Sandra says: "Providing a prospective owner thoroughly researches the breed and takes advice from responsible and experienced breeders then being a first-time owner should not be a problem. As long as a Chow is given ample daily opportunities for moderate exercise, the size of a garden is not really an issue. Obviously a large garden is an advantage, but Chows can cope quite well in smaller spaces as long as they get that essential outdoor exercise on a daily basis.

Advises Pauline: "Anyone thinking of getting a Chow should understand that they are rather independent dogs

### Did you know?

The Chow Chow has a blue-black tongue, which used to be thought unique to this breed. However, other breeds, probably with Chow in their origins, also have this colouration to some degree – including the Shar-Pei.

and it's vital they get adequate and sensitive socialisation incorporating a wide range of experiences, as well as meeting people of all ages and other animals.

"They may not suit people with expectations of dogs that they can do agility and obedience activities with, although there are Chow individuals that do both activities with relish.

"Chows do tend to like access to gardens and will spend a good deal of time sleeping outside, so a secure and, at the least, medium-size garden is necessary.

"The size of the house is not important, although I would avoid houses that require the dog to go up and down stairs frequently to save wear and tear on their joints.

"Before taking the plunge and getting a pup, check out the breeder carefully: ensure the parents have had relevant health checks or assessments, and see the mother with the pups – although bear in mind that bitches may be kept apart from the pups at viewings since they can be very protective of their babies.

"Be aware that the mother may look quite thin and coatless, since bitches usually go through a heavy moult during pregnancy and when rearing puppies, but nevertheless she should look bright and healthy and be biddable towards visitors."

### TRAINING

According to Sandra: "Chows are trainable, to a degree, and with patience and perseverance, normal commands and acceptable lead behaviour should not be

**Chows have a strong chase instinct and are not endowed with good road sense, so on-lead exercise while out and about is the safest option.**

hard to achieve."

Says Pauline: "They are biddable dogs in general, but on their own terms. However, they are receptive to reward-based training as long as it is rewarding enough to keep their attention. They are not retrievers, but might retrieve, nor are they Border Collies who live to work; training has to be imaginative and fun and geared to the individual Chow's ideas of what is rewarding.

"Jean Donaldson, a trainer in the US, has commented on training her Chow compared to training her Border Collie, in that they are very trainable, but on their own terms, so some will have excellent recall while others will only recall when they feel like it."

### ACTIVITIES

Brought up correctly and well-socialised, Chows make equable, laid-back and quiet companions, so are ideal for those people who don't want a particularly active doggy lifestyle, just a dog about the house and to potter about for a daily walk or two. Some are employed as Pets As Therapy dogs, while others enjoy taking part in obedience and agility.

Says Pauline: "Chows will only do something willingly if it suits them, and most would view activities such as agility



### Did you know?

Only one Chow has ever won Best in Show at Crufts, when a red dog called Choonam Hung Kwong, owned by Mrs Violet Mannocho, took the top honour in 1936, and was Reserve Best In Show in 1935 and 1939. In his illustrious showing career, Kwong amassed 44 Challenge Certificates and was valued at £5,250 – a vast sum in those days (and not too shabby now!).



## Useful contacts

Interested in owning a Chow? Then contact the breed clubs for more in-depth information on suitability for your circumstances, care and training advice and details of responsible breeders, along with details of social events, shows, breed activities and seminars.

**Chinese Chow Club**  
Mildred Bennett, tel. 01932 862304.

**Chow Chow Breed Council**,  
Claire Merrion, tel. 01480 466352.

**Chow Chow Club of Scotland** Pauline Willox,  
tel. 0131 669 3354.

**Chow Chow Club of Wales**  
Janet Green, tel. 01558 685481.

**Midland Chow Chow Club**  
Pam Godber, tel. 01773 744634.

**National Chow Chow Club**  
Gillian Claxton, tel. 01487 840644.

**North Eastern Chow Chow Club** David Robbins, tel. 0191 410 5290.

**Northern Counties Chow Chow Club** Eve Williamson,  
tel. 01484 534641.

**West of England Chow Chow Club** Sarah Bond,  
tel. 07855 770404.

**Rescue & welfare:**  
Contact the breed rescue coordinator Sheila Jakeman on 01608 658491, or any of the clubs listed above.

as beneath them. They are not for owners that want a sporting dog, although some are extremely active and would benefit from agility or obedience, although they would be unlikely to win prizes in competition. What I would say, however, is that while they are not suitable as service dogs for hearing or sight and so on, they do excel at being good companions to their families." ●

## Thanks...

Thanks to Sandra Stafford, Pauline Lock, Sheila Jakeman, the Chow Chow Breed Council and Chow Chow Club for information provided for this feature.

## Breed file

**Size:** Large.

**Height & weight:** Dogs: 48-56cm (19-22in) at the shoulder; bitches: 46-51cm (18-20in), Ideal weight when mature: in proportion to size, but around 20-32kg (44-70lb).

**Lifespan:** 12-13 years.

**Exercise:** Advises Sandra: "Puppies should be exercised frequently but only for short periods to avoid stressing their bodies and minds. As adults, Chows require moderate exercise. A fit and healthy Chow has considerable stamina and can move at a brisk pace for some considerable time. As with all dogs, be mindful of their age and condition and tailor the exercise to their needs rather than your own."

Adds Pauline: "Lead walking outside the confines of your home and garden is preferred since the Chow has poor recall for the most part, only responding if he feels like it!"

**Grooming:** Double-coated, Chows can have either a rough (profuse, dense, coarse-textured and stand-off) or a smooth (dense, straight, plush-like and upstanding) outer coat. Both have a soft, woolly undercoat.

Says Pauline: "The undercoat should be regularly groomed through and down to the skin to avoid matting. Slicker brushes, wide-toothed combs and quality bristle brushes are typically used."

"If taken to a groomer's, Chows should never be dried in a cabinet since this can cause them to fatally overheat."

Comments Sandra: "The breeder should be able to give new owners advice on grooming. Neglecting the coat will make the dog feel extremely hot and uncomfortable and almost certainly lead to skin problems."

Ensure the ears,



Chow puppies are said to be naturally clean and quick to house-train with correct care and training.

under the tail and the sheath (in males) are kept clean, and check the nails do not get too long – ask a breeder or dog groomer to show you how to maintain them, or do them for you, on a regular basis.

**Colours:** Whole coloured black, red, blue, fawn, cream or white. The eyes are dark, but matching coloured eyes may be found in blues and fawns. The nose is black in all cases, although it can be a lighter colour in cream and near-white dogs, and self-coloured in blues and fawns.



**Health:** As with most pedigree breeds today, there are some health issues in some lines to be aware of. These include skin problems (due to hormonal imbalances, incorrect diet, insufficient and improper grooming or environmental issues), entropion (inturned eyelids, which have varying degrees of severity and can be surgically corrected), and hind leg ligament problems.

Says Pauline: "The Chow Chow is, however, a relatively healthy breed. Past concerns were mainly related to entropion but changes to the breed standard and the move towards a slightly larger oval eye has much reduced the incidence of this condition. Conditions such as hip and elbow dysplasia have been recorded, but the breed average scores remain relatively low. It is advisable to ask breeders if they score their breeding stock and what the parents' scores are." Visit [tinyurl.com/mc9jq6s](http://tinyurl.com/mc9jq6s) for more information on Chow health and health schemes.

**Diet:** Any good-quality, complete dog food to suit the dog's age, or a natural diet of raw meat and mixer biscuits. Sandra advises that, in general, Chows fare well on low-protein foods. It's a good idea to ask the breeder and/or breed clubs for advice on life-stage feeding.

**KC breed standard & more info:** [tinyurl.com/ks8ywwy](http://tinyurl.com/ks8ywwy)

That blue-black tongue is certainly distinctive!



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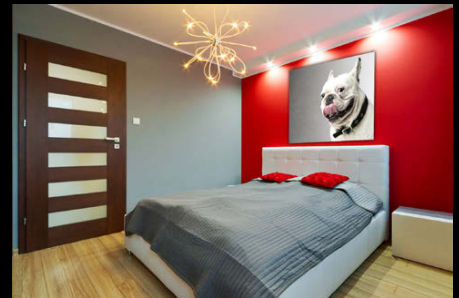


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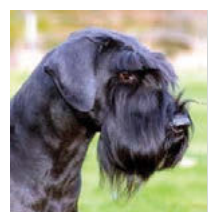


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From the dog's mouth...

# A 'hole' load of gifts

Our canine correspondent **Molly** has some surprises in store for her owners on Christmas morning.

**E**ver since I joined my household at the tender age of eight weeks, I have been included in the happy ritual of exchanging presents on Christmas Day. Well, I say exchanging, but the truth is I receive presents but have never been able to reciprocate. And given my sensitive nature this has bothered me.

So, a few months ago I hatched a plan. It was quite a complicated plan, but in my mind at least it made sense and would enable me to repay my family's generosity.

In order to explain my gift I have to first give you some background. When I was a young Airedale I had a passion for digging. It started in a modest way, a little missing area of turf here... a small hole there... but the more I dug, the more I felt the urge to dig bigger, deeper holes.

In truth the whole sorry business got out of hand. After a few months the lawn resembled the surface of the moon, and I had taken to storing things in its many craters. (Balls, stolen socks, tea towels, that sort of thing). The humans reached snapping point the day my master tripped in one of my excavations and

came perilously close to ending up face down on the ground.

Shortly after this, my family spent a weekend filling in my copious holes and re-turfing the lawn. At the same time a small fenced area was constructed at the bottom of the garden so I could be safely left outside without supervision.

Now I'm not slow on the uptake – I realised I had overstepped a line. And overstepped it badly. I reformed my ways, managed to outgrow my digging and am now able to enjoy the whole garden again unsupervised.

So that is the past. To return to the present, I decided a few months back that, for Christmas, I would give my owners a demonstration of my increased maturity. I would dig new holes, but I would dig them where they did not impact on the look of the garden or constitute a trip hazard. These holes would be neat and controlled. I happily anticipated the praise I would get when I showed them to my owners.

I selected three discreet spots: under the apple tree, where plants cover the ground; behind a low-hanging bush; and finally in the narrow gap between our house and our neighbours'.



Of course my paws aren't muddy – that's just my natural coat colour.

Things started well. I carefully dug the holes, stopping when they were a modest size. But here's the thing: having executed my plan so beautifully I found I could not stop thinking about digging. The sweet-smelling earth was calling me and I couldn't resist.

I'm ashamed to say these holes are no longer restrained. I stopped digging under the apple tree when I reached the roots and became alarmed that the tree might fall over. The hole under the bush is now so deep that I have to climb out of it after a digging frenzy. And it can't be long before I accidentally tunnel under the wall that divides our property from next-door's and emerge triumphantly into their garden.

So far, the results of my

activities have not been discovered. I receive quizzical looks when I come in with muddy paws, but I chose my locations well and no one can work out what I've been up to.

I'm now rather less confident about how my gifts will go down on Christmas morning, but I plan to decorate them with baubles and tinsel and hope for the best. ●

## About the author



**Emma Taylor** is a mother of two and first-time dog owner. **Molly** is an Airedale Terrier's

Airedale Terrier, which is no mean feat but a bit terrifying if you're a first-time dog owner.



Looking ahead

# See what we've got in store for **YOU** next month!

**Dogs Monthly** is looking forward to the New Year and resolves to give all our lovely readers a very happy and interesting 2015. Letting you in on a little secret... We're having a bit of a revamp and a fresh start – and intending to bring you even more fabulous features, offers and wonderful opportunities. Here's a taster...

January  
issue on sale  
4 December  
– just in  
time for  
Christmas!

## NEW YEAR, NEW RESOLUTIONS

Shhh... don't tell anyone, but Britain's oldest dog magazine (32 years young this year) will be welcoming a very special contributor next month. His name is Bob... and he's a cat!

His owner James Bowen had never written a book before, but now he's in the same superstar bracket as JK Rowling – and Bob is the subject of several international best-selling books. In the spirit of Christmas he'll be telling you how his pet changed his life, and we'll be looking at the stars of other pet-related best sellers too.

Happy pets = happy owners!

## FANCY YOURSELF AS AN AUTHOR?

Does the love of your pet inspire you to write?

We'll be launching a new writing competition next month... with so many pet-related titles making their way into the best-seller charts, and even being made into movies, we'll be encouraging you to get writing about your pet in an exciting new competition.

We can't wait to bring you our next issue which is, as always, packed with down-to-earth, practical, informative and entertaining features to help you get the most out of your special relationship with your pets.

See you soon....








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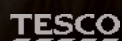
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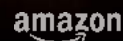
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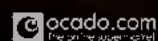


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\*Taken from the study 'Effects of diet restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs' JAVMA, Vol 220, No. 9, May 1, 2002.